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JACOB AT BETHEL

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Studies on Biblical Subjects.

No. II.

JACOB AT BETHEL:
THE VISION—THE STONE—
THE ANOINTING.

AN ESSAY IN COMPARATIVE RELIGION

BY

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. THE VISION OF THE LADDER AND ITS IDEAL BASIS	
IN THE BABYLONIAN ZIGGURAT	I
1. THE MOUNTAIN OF THE WORLD	17
2. EL SHADDAI	25
3. THE LADDER	31
4. THE NORTH STAR AN ABODE OF DEITY . .	38
5. THE ANGELIC HOST	47
6. THE NAME "BETHEL"	73
II. THE STONE A BETH-EL OR "HOUSE OF GOD" .	82
1. STONE-WORSHIP	84
2. SEMITIC STONE-WORSHIP	105
3. BABYLONIAN STONE-WORSHIP	108
4. ABRAHAM AND 'OZZĀ	114
5. BAETYLS	120
6. HEBREW STONE-WORSHIP	123
7. JAHVEH A ROCK	128
III. THE ANOINTING OF THE STONE	133
1. THE RATIONALE OF ANOINTING	133
2. BABYLONIAN ANOINTING	137
3. OIL AND FAT IN UNCTION	139
4. RELIGIOUS USE OF UNCTION	151
APPENDIX	163
INDEX	185

JACOB AT BETHEL

PART I

THE VISION

1. IN the present study I propose to examine in the light of comparative Religion the interesting episode in the life of Jacob which is recorded in the Book of Genesis, chap. xxviii. 1 *seq.*, as follows:

“And Isaac (Heb. Yitz’hâq) called Jacob (Heb. Ya’aqôb), and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, ‘Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan (Heb. Kenâ’an). Arise, go to Paddan-Arâm, to the house of Bethûêl thy mother’s father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Lâbân thy mother’s brother. And God Almighty (Heb. El Shaddai) bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a company of peoples; and give thee the blessing of Abrâhâm, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land of thy

sojournings, which God gave unto Abrâhâm.' And Isaac sent away Jacob; and he went to Paddan-Arâm unto Lâbân, son of Bethûêl the Arâmean, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother (vv. 1-6). . . . And Jacob went out from Beêrsheba and went toward Hârân. And he lighted upon the place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took one of the stones of the place, and put it under his head, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it was reaching to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.' And behold the Lord (Heb. Yahveh) was standing above it and said, 'I am the Lord (Yahveh), the God of Abrâhâm thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest to thee will I give it and to thy seed' (vv. 10-13). . . . And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, 'Surely the Lord (Yahveh) is in this place; and I knew it not.' And he was afraid, and said, 'How awe-inspiring is this place! This is none other but the House of God, and this is the Gate of Heaven.'

"And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head, and set it up for a pillar (Heb. *Matztzêbâh*), and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bêth-êl ('House of God'): but the name of the city was Lûz ('Almond-tree') at the first" (vv. 16-19).

2. When he had played off his successful deception upon his blind and aged father, "the Hebrew

Ulysses," in order to escape the consequences of his duplicity and the vengeance of the brother whom he had wronged, he resolved to fly from his home in Canaan.¹ By the advice of his mother Rebekah—and he seems to have been completely under her influence—he directs his flight to the abode of Lâbân, her brother, who dwelt in Hârân. For Rebekah was "the daughter of Bethûêl the Arâmean of Paddan-Arâm, and sister of Lâbân the Arâmean" (Gen. xxv. 20). In making for Hârân Jacob was returning to the old home of his family, where his mother had lived before her marriage, and where his paternal grandfather Abrâhâm, and his great-grandfather Terah had long sojourned. At Hârân he would find prevailing the ancient Babylonian faith in which his ancestors had been cradled, but which was now becoming only a tradition with a new generation who were enlightened with a truer knowledge of the Most High. But even within the bounds of the little family of Hebrews there lingered, and must have inevitably survived, many ideas and words and practices which belonged to the ancient Chaldean cult which they had renounced when they

¹ Popular writers and pictorial artists generally solicit our sympathy for the fugitive Jacob by portraying him as a youth or beardless lad. Thus Ruskin, "A boy leaves his father's house to go on a long journey on foot, to visit his uncle ; just as if one of your own boys had to cross the wolds," &c. (*Crown of Wild Olive*, § 62). As a matter of fact Jacob was then of the mature age of seventy-seven (*Bible Dict.*, i. 912). Others would make him to be no less than ninety-six (Ball, *Variorum Aids*, 106).

abandoned Mesopotamia for Canaan. The very names which they continued to bear would serve to remind them of the old false deities which formerly they had worshipped. Thus Abrâm was identical with the Assyrian name Abu-râmu, "High Father," a title apparently once given to Anu, the god of the heavens;¹ while Sarai was only another form of the Assyrian Sarratu, "Princess," and Milkah (the name of Sarai's sister) another form of Milkatu, "Queen"; Terah corresponds to Tarakhu, "Wanderer," and Lâbân to Lâbânu, "The White One," all these names having, no doubt, been given originally with reference to the Moon-god, who was the chief object of worship at Hârân and at Ur, and in honour of whom his worshippers took his name. Compare Heb. Lebânâ, "The White One," the Moon.² We know from the inscriptions that the cities of Kharran (Hârân) and Ur from which the Hebrews migrated were devoted to the worship of that god in a special manner, and had famous temples of great antiquity dedicated to his service. An ancient hymn to the Moon-god under the title of Nannar, "The Illuminator," which Terah and Abrâm may have sung, has been preserved on the monuments. It invokes the god to "look with favour on Ur" his city. It has been shown by Hommel, Sayce, Boscawen and other workers in this field that the

¹ Boscawen, *Vic. Inst. Trans.*, xx. 112.

² C. J. Ball, *Variorum Aids to the Bible Student*, p. 37; *Vic. Inst. Trans.*, xx. 112.

Assyrian and the Israelite in their religious faith had much in common. The Assyrians worshipped a deity Il or Ilu, who in name and some of his attributes is one with the Hebrew El (Elohim), and they wove this name into their personal appellations just as the Hebrews did. They had their Ismi-ilu, "God hears," just as the latter had Ishmael; and Anapanu-ili, "To the face of God," parallel to the Hebrew Penu-el and Peni-el.¹ Lâbân, from his Babylonian point of view, had no difficulty in discerning in the God of Abraham him who was also the God (Il) of Nahor and the god of Terah (Gen. xxxi. 53.) Similarly Yah (Yahveh = Jehovah) is found compounded in Babylonian names exactly as in Jewish.

If we find then that Jacob in his journey homeward to the ancient home of his race gave proof that he had not quite divested himself of certain beliefs and customs which had been fostered by the old Babylonian faith or superstition of his fathers, we have no cause to be surprised. The wonder would rather be if he exhibited no trace in his conduct of an influence the most potent and persistent of which human nature is susceptible—inherited religion. As a matter of fact we find that Jacob tolerated false gods in his household for many years; compare Gen. xxxi. 19 with xxxv. 2. The teraphim, which

¹ Boscauwen, *Vic. Inst. Trans.*, xx. 110. See also Pinches, *Religious Ideas of the Babylonians*, *Vic. Inst. Trans.*, xxviii. 1 seq.

his wife Rachel and her father Lâbân held in veneration according to these passages, seem to have been images of dead ancestors, the Assyrian *tarpu*, and *tarputu*, "shades of the dead."¹

3. These facts serve to remind us that when the Hebrews first enter on the stage of history as "immigrants" or "crossers"² over the Euphrates into the land of Canaan they were already heirs of an ancient civilisation. They do not come upon the scene, as has sometimes been imagined, as the Melchizedek of nations, without father, without mother, without descent, with no ancestral traditions and long-acquired possessions, in the way of religious culture and forms of belief and worship. While as a people they were indeed the subjects of a miraculous providence and the recipients of a miraculous revelation, they were not as a people miraculously exempted from the law of heredity, by virtue of which their customs and laws, their conceptions and superstitions, were deeply tinged by the long past of which they

¹ Connected with the Rephaim, "The weak ones," "Spectres," Assyrian *rapû*, to be weak (Sayce, *Hibbert Lectures*, 63, 143, 450).

² Heb. *'ibri* from *'abar*, "to cross over." It is interesting to notice the use of the same word for the passage of the Euphrates in an inscription of Shalmaneser, "Burat *îbir*," "I crossed over the Euphrates" (Assyr. *abar*, to cross) (Schrader, *Cuneiform Insc. and the Old Test.*, i. 143). The related word *abarti*, "the other side" of the Euphrates, occurs in a tablet of Assurbanipal (Boscawen, *Vic. Inst. Trans.*, xx. 118). Compare also Bethabara (St. John i. 28), "Place of crossing (or fording)." Whether *Habiri* in the Tel el-Amarna tablets denotes the Hebrews is not quite certain (C. P. Tiele, *Western Asia*).

were the outcome. The prophet Isaiah called upon the Jews of his day to look back to their early origin, "Look unto the rock whence you were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence you were digged; look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you" (Isa. li. 1, 2). But the student of origins and development now goes back farther; he explores the ancient quarry from which the Abrahamic rock itself was wrought and the primeval pit out of which Sarah herself was "dug"—"*Antiquam exquirite matrem.*"

We must never forget that Abrâhâm was for the greater part of his life a Chaldean or Babylonian before he crossed the Euphrates and became a "Hebrew." The call to a higher destiny would not make a *tabula rasa* of his experience inscribed with the teachings of a long-extended past. The family of Abrâhâm would not by its own act of quitting the land of their forefathers leave behind all their old ideas.¹ Euphrates was no Lethe. The deeply engrained habits of a race are not so lightly washed off by passing through a stream.

"Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem
Testa diu."

We have every reason, then, to anticipate that the customs and modes of thought which were held for generations by Terah and his ancestors on the plains of Mesopotamia will be found cropping up on the soil of Palestine in the history of Abrâhâm and his family,

¹ "Cælum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt"
(Horace, *Ep.* I. ii. 27).

just as long-buried seeds, if indigenous to the soil, come to light in the best cultivated ground. We have an apparently independent account of the Abrahamic migration given by one of "the sons of Canaan" in the Book of Judith (vv. 6-9): "This people are descended from the Chaldeans: and they sojourned heretofore in Mesopotamia, because they would not follow the gods of their fathers, which were in the land of Chaldea. For they departed from the way [=cult] of their ancestors, and worshipped the God of heaven,¹ the God whom they came to know: so they [the Chaldeans] cast them out from the face of their gods, and they fled into Mesopotamia, and sojourned there many days. Then their God commanded them to depart from the place where they sojourned, and to go into the land of Canaan."

4. We now turn to the passage under consideration. As Jacob was making his way towards the regions of the Euphrates he was overtaken by the darkness of approaching night in the open fields near the town of Luz. From the threefold emphasis with which the site of his bivouac is referred to (v. 11) as "the place" and "that place," it would seem that some definite and well-known locality was meant, and it has been supposed that, by a special providence, he had "lighted upon" the very spot where Abrâm on his first entrance into Canaan had built an altar unto the Lord (Yahveh) at Bethel, and had called upon the

¹ Rev. C. J. Ball compares Zi-anna, "Spirit of Heaven," a very ancient title of the Assyrian Anu (*Speaker's Comm. in loco*),

name of the Lord (Gen. xii. 8). Thus the ground would be already hallowed by sacred associations, and it may be that the particular "stones of that place" which Jacob at first selected for his pillow on which to lay his head, and afterwards set up for a pillar and consecrated as a memorial, were the very stones of his grandfather's altar, which were lying there in a ruined heap, and were still recognisable.¹ This family shrine, doubly consecrated by a theophany, the patriarch sought out again with mindful piety on his return from Paddan-Arâm (Gen. xxxv. 6, 7).

5. In the experience of Jacob at Bethel and his subsequent procedure there are three special points of interest which invite our attention :

I. The Vision of the Ladder and the Angels.

II. The Stone and its Consecration.

III. The Anointing with Oil.

These we will examine in detail.

The Vision of the Ladder and the Angels.

6. Commentators have always had a difficulty in

¹ Wherever there has been a theophany or manifestation of God's power, there an altar or new sanctuary can spring up (W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, 108). In ancient Egypt a temple was generally built on "holy ground," i.e., a spot on which, since the memory of man, an older sanctuary of the God had stood (Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, 279). Similarly in India an old foundation was sought for a new temple (Cunningham, *Archæolog. Survey of India*, ii. 353 seq. ; Trumbull, *Threshold Covenant*, 160).

realising the fundamental idea which lies in the background as the basis of Jacob's dream ; a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending on it, while the Lord (Yahveh) stood above it and spoke to him. The visible presentment of a ladder, on the rungs of which the messengers of God climbed up or came down with alternating effort of hand and foot, is too incongruous a conception to be readily accepted. This is the more felt if we conceive these messengers as winged beings, in accordance with their later representation, although Wordsworth, with a poet's ingenuity, accepts that view and contrives to draw a moral from it, when he speaks

“ Of right affections, climbing or descending
Along a scale of light and life, with cares
Alternate. . . .
Like those good angels whom a dream of night
Gave, in the field of Luz, to Jacob's sight ;
All, while *he* slept, treading the pendant stairs
Earthward or heavenward, radiant messengers,
That with a perfect will in one accord
Of strict obedience, served the Almighty Lord ;
And with untired humility forbore
The ready service of the wings they wore.”¹

The grotesque results which have followed when artists have ventured to give embodiment to the vision—as on the front of Bath Abbey—manifest the improbability of this interpretation of it. Others,

¹ *Humanity, Poems*, ed. 1888, p. 554.

with somewhat more likelihood, have understood the medium suggested to be a shining staircase, down which the angelic forms were seen to trip lightly on their earthward errands. But even here we seek in vain for any definite notion of the patriarchal pre-conception on which the details of the dream were framed. All dreams are based on the previous experiences of the dreamer. We ask, therefore, was there anything in the religious ideas of an early Hebrew—which he shared in common with his Babylonian cousins—that would familiarise him with the conception of a tangible means of communication reared between earth and heaven? To find an answer to this question we must closely examine the words of the original narrative. We note then that the word in the Hebrew translated “ladder” is *sullām*. This rare word is a derivative of the verb *sálal*, to elevate or cast up a mound, and akin to *sol^llah*, a mound thrown up by besiegers (Jer. xxxiii. 4). It is also nearly related to *mēsillāh*, the terraced embankment or gradual ascent in stages (2 Chron. ix. 11)¹ which Solomon made in his temple. If the word then probably meant something like a terraced mound, we have next to consider whether any conception of that kind was likely to have occupied such a conspicuous position in the ancient religious system once familiar to the Hebrews, that it might naturally give colour and shape to the idealism of Jacob’s dreams. There was such a one undoubtedly. In Hârân, the home of

¹ Also a heaped-up road, a “highway” (Gesenius, 957).

his mother, towards which his face was set; in Ur, the native place of his grandfather, which must have now filled his thoughts, a lofty terraced mound was the outward visible embodiment of the Chaldean faith in a divinity—almost what the “star-ypointing” tower and spire of the cathedral is to the Christian¹—a witness for the unseen world. It was, in fact, the Babylonian temple, or Ziggurat, and as such the symbol of the worship and local presence of the heavenly powers. The House of God could take no other shape but that for Jacob, whether awake or asleep, for *none other but that then existed*. That, and none other, could he have any knowledge of.

The Ziggurat.

7. Rising to a commanding altitude above the surrounding buildings, the Ziggurat² must have been a conspicuous object on the flat alluvial plains of Babylon. It was a solid square tower, built on a broad platform of sun-dried bricks, and consisting of eight diminishing stages, or more accurately of seven stages

¹ So Wordsworth, in his sonnet on “Cathedrals,” speaks of :

“Watching, with upward eye, the tall tower grow
And mount, at every step, with living wiles
Instinct—to rouse the heart and lead the will
By a bright ladder to the world above.”

² The Babylonian *Ziggurrātu*, a temple-tower or observatory, originally “an enclosed place,” Assyr. *šigurrātu*, from the Assyr. and Heb. *šāgar*, to enclose or shut (Sayce, *Assyrian Grammar*, 115). Cf. Heb. *šēgôr*, *ma-sgêr*, *mi-sgereth*, an enclosure (*Trans. Soc. Bib. Archaeology*, iii. 229; Lenormant, *Hist. Anc.*, ii. 199).

which rose one above the other, and were surmounted at the top by the shrine or sanctuary of the deity in whose honour it was erected. The sides faced the cardinal points; and, in some instances, as in the famous tower of Bel-Merodach at Babylon, the total height of the erection was 300 feet. The different storeys of this pyramidal tower were connected by an inclined ascent which wound round it like a cornice from bottom to top.¹ The first Chaldean architects made these massive temples as high as they possibly could without risking their stability. An early instance of such was the tower of Babel, whose top was to reach to heaven. The Ziggurat seen at a distance must have borne a close resemblance to the oldest type of Egyptian building—which, indeed, was most probably derived from it—the stepped pyramids of Memphis and Sakkara; a resemblance which was lost to a great extent when the steps were filled in to form a smooth surface, as in the later straight-lined pyramids.²

The magnificent Ziggurat of Bel-Merodach at

¹ A representation of a Ziggurat is given in Perrot and Chipiez and in Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, p. 224; Smith, *Bible Dict.*, i. 160; Laing, *Human Origins*, 150.

² Ihering, *Origin of the Aryans*, 101; Trumbull, *Threshold Covenant*, III. *Entenamaslu*, the Babylonian name of a constellation, meaning "Lord of the Foundation, Hero of the Brickwork," is supposed to refer to the Ziggurat or altar-tower (R. Brown in *Soc. Bib. Arch. Trans.*, ix. 307, xviii. 35). Conder observes that some of the tells or ancient mounds of Syria with their terraced sides must have resembled a Ziggurat in appearance (*Stone-Lore of Syria*, 49, 129).

Babylon, which was known as E-Sagilla, "The House of the Lofty Head" (a name which recalls Solomon's "House of Exaltation," 1 Kings viii. 13), was designed as a sort of orrery in stone, and reveals the astronomical character of these buildings. Each of its seven storeys was consecrated to one of the divinities of the seven planets, and was coloured with the tint appropriate to that planet. Beginning at its lowest stage with black, this great architectural spectrum ranged through orange, red, gold, yellow, and blue, up to the final stage, which was of silver, and was dedicated to the Moon (SIN). The highest platform was crowned with a miniature chapel, which consisted of a small cupola covered with plates of gold, and contained a figure of the deity.¹

Another famous Ziggurat was that of Nebo at Borsippa, the ruins of which even now rise 153 feet above the plain. The seven-staged tower was variously known as E-Zida, "the House of Life" or "Eternal Temple"; as "the House of the Seven Spheres (or bonds) of Heaven or Earth," and "The House of the Foundation-stone of Heaven and Earth."²

These tower-temples, as their careful orientation

¹ Herodotus i. 181; Sayce, *Hibbert Lectures*, 64, 437-40; Maspero, *Hist. Ancienne*, 224, who gives the colours in a different order. Nizami, in his poem *Heft Peïker*, describes a sevenfold palace with a sevenfold colouring in the order of the planets (*Ethnolog. Soc. Trans.*, 1861, 25).

² Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, 94, 112, 113; Budge, *Babylonian Life*, 26.

shows, were used as observatories for astronomical purposes as well as for religious worship—the two being indeed identical at that time. Their stages, dedicated to the sun, moon, and five planets, were arranged in order according to the apparent magnitude of their respective orbits, and the whole was designed to be a symbol of the planetary system revolving spiral-fashion round one supreme and consummating point, which was the abode of the god of the heavens.

8. In the Chaldean cosmogony the heavens were regarded as a vault or great inverted bowl of crystal which revolved upon the peak of an exceedingly high mountain as upon an axis. As the daily revolutions of the heavenly bodies were made round the North Pole as a fixed point, this sacred mountain of the world was conceived to be in the North, and the Ziggurat was intended to be a representation of it on as large a scale as lay in man's power to build.¹ The apex or peak of this world mountain, in particular, as the pivot of creation, was termed the Ziggurat; it was also the home of the gods. The words for "the peak of the mountain" on which the Babylonian Noah made an offering of incense in the Deluge Tablets (col. 3, l. 46) are "Ziggurat Shadi."²

Another great national temple of the Babylonians

¹ Maspero, *Dawn of Civilisation*, 544; S. Laing, *Human Origins*, 152; Lenormant, *Chald. Magic*, 152.

² Lenormant, *Beginnings of History*, p. 584.

was E-Parra, or, as Professor Sayce reads it, E-Babara, "the House of Lustre," the chief seat of sun-worship at Sippara, its still more ancient Akkadian name being Zimbir, "the city of the sun in the great plain."¹ But by far the most ancient temple in the world was the Ziggurat of Bel at Calneh, now called Nippur, which was probably built before 5000 B.C.

The conical mound of earth, rising seventy feet above the plain, which now conceals its ruins, was laid open by Dr. J. P. Peters in 1890.² The lofty "high place" disclosed was raised in three stages upon a solid platform of sun-dried brick. In this respect it agrees exactly with a representation of a Ziggurat which is given on the Assyrian monuments, and may be seen pictured in Dr. J. D. Davis's "Genesis and Semitic Tradition," p. 140. "The Ziggurat of the Temple of Bel at Nippur," says Dr. Peters, "or rather the temple itself, with the Ziggurat as apex, was an artificial mountain, and the inscriptions found there inform us that the name of the temple was in fact E-kur or 'Mountain House,' while the Ziggurat was called Imgarsag, 'Mountain of Heaven,' or Sagash, 'High Towering.' The small brick structure that crowned the

¹ Boscawen, *Vic. Inst. Trans.*, xxvii. 248; Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, 168.

² See J. P. Peters's *Nippur; or Explorations and Adventures on the Euphrates. The Narrative of the University of Pennsylvania Expedition to Babylonia, 1888-90*, vol. ii.; W. J. Deane, *Abraham*, 21.

Ziggurat was the mysterious dwelling-place of the unseen God.”¹

The Mountain of the World.

9. Professor Ihering, commenting on the fact that the Babylonians differed from all other nations in not taking a human habitation as their model for a temple of their gods, but chose instead a solid-built tower which could only be ascended from the outside, suggests as an explanation of the peculiarity that this primitive conception of a divine abode was the mountain, and that this they strove to imitate in their huge massive piles. “It is a familiar belief, found amongst many nations in the time of their infancy, that the Godhead dwells on the mountains”—whose heads seem to hold commune with the stars, on whose cloud-capped summits the heavens seem to bow themselves and come down—“therefore mountains are the fitting places on which to offer worship.” They seem with the voice of Nature to cry, “Glory to God in the highest!”

“It is Thine own calm home, Thy crystal shrine,
Thy habitation from eternity!
O dread and silent Mount! I gazed upon thee,
Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,
Didst vanish from my thought: entranced in prayer
I worshipped the Invisible alone.

.

¹ J. P. Peters, *Nippur*, ii. 122.

Thou too, hoar Mount! with thy sky-pointing peaks,
 Thou kingly spirit throned among the hills,
 Thou dread Ambassador from earth to heaven,
 Great Hierarch! tell thou the silent sky,
 And tell the stars, and tell yon rising sun,
 Earth with her thousand voices praises God." ¹

Accordingly the Persians chose for their worship the highest mountains they could find (Hdtus. i. 131);² the Jews, who were kindred to the Babylonians, not only before the building of Solomon's temple (1 Kings iii. 2), but afterwards sacrificed on the mountains (1 Kings xxii. 44, ii. 4, 14). In David's time the people were accustomed to worship God upon the top of the Mount of Olives (2 Sam. xv. 32); the Samaritans had their sanctuary on Mount Gerizim as the Jews had theirs on Mount Zion. The Canaanitish *bâmôth*, or "high places," were only conventional representations of hills, as the ziggurats were, for purposes of worship.³ Indeed "the high places of the earth had something of a sacred character even for the earliest Jahveism. Even when the old belief was beginning to waver, a piece of rocky

¹ Coleridge, *Hymn before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouny*.

² "They [the Persians] are accustomed to ascend to the highest part of the mountains and offer sacrifice to Zeus. They call the whole circle of the heavens by the name of Zeus" (Hdtus. i. 131). Origen, *Contra Cels.*, v. 41, 44.

³ Keil, *Biblical Archæology*, ii. 72 seq. On the Moabite stone Mesha says: "I made this *bâmâh* (high-place) for Chemosh." See also Herzog, *Encycl.*, s.v. "High Places," who remarks that artificial heights for temples among many tribes of America and Asia consist of truncated pyramids.

ground, at any rate, was selected by preference as the best locality for an altar.”¹ The Syrians (Arameans) in the time of Ben-hadad used to say of the God of the Israelites, “The Lord [Jahveh] is a God of the hills, but he is not a God of the valleys” (1 Kings xx. 28). “I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains,” cried the worshipper of Jahveh quite naturally when he sought His help (Ps. cxxi. 1). Now “the ancestors of both Hebrews and Babylonians, although inhabiting the plain country of Babylonia, and developing their civilisation on that soil, were not autochthonous there. Their forefathers had been natives of the mountains. Thence their children, descending to the plain, had brought many primitive ideas, and among others the idea of God as a God of mountain-tops. Ziggurats were conventional representations of such mountains.”² Even so the God of Jacob, according to the Psalmist (lxxviii. 69), “built His sanctuary *like the heights*”—i.e. like the high mountains. Ihering arrives at precisely the same conclusion. The Babylonians (Akkadian-Sumerians) being accustomed to mountain sanctuaries before they descended into the plains, “how could they maintain their old

¹ Ewald, *Antiquities of Israel*, 121; Conder, *Syrian Stone-Lore*.

² J. P. Peters, *Nippur*, ii. 121; compare Jer. iii. 23. “Mountains, when they shine in the golden hue of morning, are even like altars of the Most High; man’s love of mountaineering is perhaps a vague longing to realise on earth’s remotest heights his own connection with the infinite Creator” (Von Tschudi, *Nature in the Alps*, 184, 193).

way of worshipping the gods in their new home, where there were no mountains at all? What nature withheld art supplied. They built an artificial mountain in their temple-tower, in which, after the manner of mountains where one crag of rock towers over another, they placed one stone quadrant above the other. At a distance the temple-tower must have given the beholder the impression of a conically-shaped rock in the midst of the plain." The temple-tower or stony-temple represented a bare mountain, just as their so-called hanging gardens, with their terraces, represented a wooded mountain. On the highest summit stood the shrine where the deity revealed himself. "Here on the height, far from the noise and turmoil of the street, and in the same pure atmosphere which breathed on the mountains, the god would take his rest with his elected, without being disturbed by any one."¹ So "the meaning of the Babylonian temple-tower, summarised in a word, would be "Mountain of God." This is the name given to the temple in the Old Testament; the temple is "the holy mountain" (Ps. xlviii. 2; Ezra xxviii. 14). The thought which led the Babylonians to the building of these temples was to furnish the Godhead with an artificial substitute for his accustomed mountain. In this sense, therefore, it may be said that

¹ Ihering, *Evolution of the Aryan*, 125. It will be remembered how the Saviour sanctioned this idea by His own practice, often frequenting the mountain-top for prayer. The tabernacle in the time of the monarchy was often erected on a height (1 Chron. xvi. 39, xxi. 29 2 Chron. i. 3).

the same motive which guided all other nations in their temple-building, viz. the making of a habitation for the Godhead to dwell in, was present also with the Babylonians, the difference being that with the latter it was not the habitation of man (the house), but that of the Godhead (the mountain) that was chosen for model."¹

10. Professor Sayce had long before expressed a similar conviction, that the origin of the Ziggurat is to be found in the primitive worship of the Akkadians while they yet dwelt in the mountains of the North-East;² inasmuch as the original cult of the mountain-tops could only be maintained artificially in the plains of Mesopotamia by means of mounds or tower-temples, on the summit of which the priests might continue that close communion

¹ Ihering, 126.

² *Soc. Biblical Archæology Trans.* (1874), iii. 151-52. A temple at Yemen in Arabia, from the description given of it, was apparently copied from the Ziggurat (Conder, *Syrian Stone-Lore*, 325). A curious resemblance to the Babylonian sacred mount may be traced in Dante's Mountain of Purgatory, which is "a vast conical mountain, rising steep and high from the waters of the Southern ocean, at a point antipodal to Mount Sion in Jerusalem. Around it run *seven terraces*, on which are punished severally the seven deadly sins. *Rough stairways*, cut in the rock, lead up from terrace to terrace, and *on the summit* is the garden of the Terrestrial Paradise" (Longfellow, *Divine Comedy*, 363). Even the Eskimo conceive the upper world as a high mountain top in the far north, round which the vaulted sky revolves, and inhabited by the souls of the deceased, who cause the Aurora borealis (Rink, *Esquimaux*, 48; Spencer, *Sociology*, i. 807). The resemblance of the *teocallis*, "houses of God," of ancient

with heaven which they had formerly enjoyed on nature's high places.¹ Accordingly "the Mountain of the World" was the name borne by one temple at Calah and by another at Ursagkalama;² while the famous temple of Nebo at Borsippa was known as "the illustrious mound."³ One of the great titles of Ann, the god of the sky, was "King of the Holy Mound," or "the Lord who issues forth from the illustrious mound," and Istar was revered as "the goddess of the holy mound" (*tul ellu*).⁴

An ancient Akkadian hymn addresses a mountain as "Splendour of the Temple of the East" (Bit-

Mexico to the Babylonian Ziggurat is so startling that they seem to argue an influence from Eastern Asia. They are described as solid masses of earth of pyramidal form, distributed into four or five storeys, each of smaller dimensions than that below. The ascent was by a flight of steps leading from terrace to terrace of a gallery which passed quite round the structure, so that one had to make the circuit of the temple several times before reaching the summit. Sometimes the stairway led directly up the centre of the western face of the building. On the top were erected one or two towers, forty or fifty feet high, the sanctuaries in which stood the sacred images of the presiding deities (Prescott, *Conquest of Mexico* (7th ed.), 24). Figures of the Mexican temple and of a pyramidal temple at Tanjore, built in stages and topped with a chapel for fire-worship, are given in McClintock and Strong, *Biblical Cyclopædia*, s.v. "Babel," vol. i. p. 593.

¹ Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, 96 and 405; Tiele, *Hist. of Anct. Religions*, 75. On the significance of mountains, see Ruskin, *Mod. Painters*, iv., ch. xx., § 45, 49.

² Hilprecht, *Old Babylonian Inscriptions*, i. 26.

³ Sayce, *l. c.*

⁴ Sayce, 113, 405; Boscawen, *Vic. Inst. Trans.*, xvii. 252.

Kurra), which Professor Sayce understands to be the same with *Kharsak-Kurra*, "the Mountain of the East," where the gods had their dwelling. He translates it as follows :

"O mighty mountain of Bel, Im-Kharsak,¹ whose
Head rivals heaven, whose root (is) the holy deep ! . . .
Its horn, like the brilliance of the sun, is bright,
Like the star of heaven it is a prophet and is filled with
sheen."²

The "Silber-horn" referred to here is, no doubt, the Ziggurat, and it is worthy of note that in a representation of a temple-tower given on one of the monuments, rising in three stages (as at Nippur) above a lofty mound as a base, and surmounted by a ziggurat, two pairs of spreading horns are conspicuous on the upper front of the latter.³ This

¹ Otherwise, *Imgarsag*, "Mountain of Heaven," as above (p. 16), of the temple at Nippur (Hilprecht, Peters).

² *Records of the Past*, xi. 131 ; Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, 362.

³ A three-staged Ziggurat is apparently represented in the middle register of the stone of Merodach Baladan I. in Perrot and Chipiez, *Art in Chaldæa and Assyria*, i. 73. See the picture, given without reference, in J. D. Davis, *Genesis and Semitic Traditions*, p. 140. The Mount of the Gods in the North was called Arallu and "the Father of Countries." Its peak shines as a star. See Ragozin, *Chaldæa*, 276-79 ; Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, 360 ; Schrader, *Cuneiform Insc. and Old Test.*, ii. 79. The hymn quoted above is thus rendered by Hilprecht :

"O great mountain of Bêl, Imkharsag ["Mountain of Heaven"]

Whose summit rivals the heavens . . .

Whose horns are gleaming like the radiant sun,

As the stars of heaven are filled with lustre"

(*Old Babylonian Inscriptions*, pt. ii. p. 228).

Sacred Mountain, which is the centre of the world round which heaven and earth revolve, and on which the gods have their abode, reappears among many nations; as the Alborj of the Parsees, the Merû of the early Aryans, the Olympus of the Greeks, the Himavata of the Thibetans, the Sumêru of the Buddhists resting on the North Pole, the Asaheim of the Northmen, the Kouantun and T'ai of the Chinese,¹ the Kailâsa of the Hindus. The prophet Isaiah, with appropriate allusion to the superstition of Babylon, introduces its King as boasting, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit on the mount of assembly (of the gods) in the corner of the north" (xiv. 13). This sacred mount in the north is the Akkadian "mountain of the world" already referred to.² In the Burman cosmology a very similar part is sustained by Myemnoh Toung,³ a mountain in the centre of the world, upon which at various heights are ranged the six blissful seats of the Dewahs⁴—i.e. the inhabitants of the six inferior heavens; and it is interesting to find that the peak

¹ D. G. Brinton, *Myths of the New World* (2nd ed.), 88, 320; H. C. Du Bose, *Dragon, Image and Demon*, 209, 273.

² Sayce, *Fresh Light from the Monuments*, 41, 178; *Hib. Lect.*, 360.

³ Shway Yoe, *The Burman*, i. 109.

⁴ See also Schrader, *Cuneiform Inscr. and the Old Test.*, ii. 79; *Cont. Rev.*, Sept. 1881, p. 455; *Records of Past*, i. 4 and 8. Compare also a Brahmin's drawing in Wagner, *Asgard and the Gods*, 17.

of this sacred mount gave the first notion of the central pyramid of the Burman payah or pagoda,¹ just as the Babylonian mount suggested the Ziggurat. The famous Temple of Heaven at Peking has certain points in common. It is erected on an elevation which consists of three marble terraces, rising one above the other, twenty-seven feet high; the building itself, with a triple roof, rises to the height of ninety-nine feet. The terraces are connected by four flights of steps coinciding with the four points of the compass.²

El Shaddai.

II. The analogies and parallels given above enable us to understand why the Hebrews in early times, like other Semites, associated the idea of God with that of the mountain which was the chosen seat of His worship. The Old Testament abounds in such expressions as "the mount of the Lord" (Gen. xxii. 14), "the mount of God" (Exod. xviii. 5), "the holy hill of Zion" (Ps. ii. 2), "worship at His holy hill" (Ps. xcix. 9), "the mountain which God hath desired for His abode" (Ps. lxviii. 16), "the holy mountain of God" (Ezek. xxviii. 14), "their (the Israelites')

¹ S. Yoe, *The Burman*, i. 192. A parallel may be traced also in the fact that at a Burmese feast in memory of Buddha's ascent from earth to his mother Maya, a lofty platform is erected with a sloping way leading up to the top representing the path of his ascent, and the top itself is a tower-like spire with seven diminishing roofs (Shoay Yoe, *The Burman*, ii. 25).

² Du Bose, *Dragon, Image and Demon*, 58-60.

God is a God of the hills" (1 Kings xx. 23). Indeed, centuries before the Israelites took possession of Palestine the Canaanites were accustomed to worship their deity, Ilû (= Heb. El, God), upon the mountain. Amongst the names of tributary places in S. Palestine, of which a list is given at Karnak by the Egyptian monarch Thothmes III., appears *Har-Ilû*, "the Mountain of Ilû," the exact synonym of *Har-el*, "the Mountain of God," perhaps an ancient name for Jerusalem (Sayce);¹ we may compare with this "A Mountain of God (*Har Elôhîm*) is the mountain of Bashan" (Ps. xlviii. 15). Mount Arafat, near Mecca, is regarded by the Arabs not merely as a sacred mountain, but as itself a divinity.²

And so in Palestine we find the deification of certain prominent mountains, as Baal Lebanon, Baal Hermon, &c.;³ just as by the Greeks the worship of Zeus was localised on the hill-tops of Ithome, Parnes and Cithæron.⁴

This primitive association of the heaven-approaching mountain, the most exalted object in creation,

¹ Maspero, *Vic. Inst. Trans.*, xxii. 85, 99. Sinai was probably a pre-Mosaic Mount of God (Driver, *Deut.* xxxiii. 2), originally sacred to Sin, the Moon-god (Boscawen, *Monuments*, 64; Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, 437). Compare Casius, Hermon, Carmel, &c., as dwelling-places of deities, W. R. Smith, *Rel. of Semites*, 94, 111; H. F. Tozer, *Highlands of Turkey*, ii. 22.

² Lenormant, *Hist. Anc.*, iii. 363.

³ Conder, *Syrian Stone-Lore*, 73.

⁴ A. Lang, *Myth, Ritual and Religion*, ii. 169.

with the deity, "the Most High," as is now generally admitted, serves to explain the word Shaddai, which we meet in the passage before us (Gen. xxviii. 3, xvii. 1). "El Shaddai (God Almighty) bless thee." This title exactly corresponds to the Assyrian *Il Shadde*, and preserves the primeval conception of Jahveh (Jehovah) as "the mountain God,"¹ "He who dwells on the mountain," or as Amos (iv. 13) says, "He walketh on the *high places* of the earth," where the Hebrew word, *bâmôth* (as Mr. Ball has shown) is just the Assyrian *bâmâtu*, "hill-tops," which word is given as a synonym of *Shaddî* (Babylonian, *Sati*), mountains.² Thus Shaddai, the Mountainous Being, the Loftiest, is the Assyrian Shadu (Sadu), mountain, which was commonly given as a title to the Babylonian gods; *e.g.* Bel was invoked as Shadû Rabû, "Great Mountain"; the ancient hymn to the sacred ziggurat given above (p. 23) begins "Shadû rabû (ilu) Bêl," "O great mountain of Bel."³ Sin, the Moon-god, is called "Bel-Harran-Shadua," "the Lord of Harran is my mountain";⁴ Beltu-Shadua, "Beltis is my moun-

¹ Hommel, *Ancient Heb. Tradition*, 109-111; Schrader, *Cuneiform Inscr. and Old Test.*, ii. 306; Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, 407. Cf. Montinus, a god of the Mountains (Arnob. 4, 132). The Santals call their Spirit of Evil, Marang Buru, "the Great Mountain" (*Vic. Inst. Trans.*, xix. 120).

² *Variorum Aids to the Bible Student*; Delitzsch, *New Comm. on Genesis*, i. 31.

³ Hilprecht, *Old Babylonian Inscriptions*, pt. ii. 228.

⁴ Hommel, *l. c.*

tain," is an Assyrian name. Anu, the God of heaven, is "the King of the Holy Mountain,"¹ and a Babylonian king was entitled E-Saggil-Saddu-ni, "The House of the Lofty Head is our Mountain."² This natural comparison finds an illustration in a remark of Wordsworth's when writing to Godwin: "I look now on the mountains—that visible God Almighty that looks in at all my windows."

Bethel.

12. If the thoughts of Jacob when going forth to Hârân, the old home of his race, should have reverted to Shaddai, the ancient protector of his people, whose blessing had just been invoked upon him by his father, it is only what we might expect. It was equally natural that his imagination should recall the dwelling-places which his ancestors had erected for Him in the mountlike ziggurat which seemed with its graduated terraces to reach to the very skies. We may conceive that his thoughts would centre

¹ Boscawen, *Vic. Inst. Trans.*, xvii. 252.

² Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, 407. Cf. "May the great mountain (*Sadurabu*), the father of Mul-lil (say to thee), when (wilt thou rest)?"—Hymn to Merodach (Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, 489). Mr. Ball cites *Dimmer Satum* from a seal, "the god Shaddai," as an old Babylonian title of the Sun-god (*Variorum Aids*, No. 110). Prof. Plumptre notes that Shaddai and Elion ("the Most High"), two names common to the Chaldean and patriarchal religion, are brought together in Ps. xci. 1 (*Biblical Studies*, 29), and similarly in the prophecy of the Mesopotamian Balaam (Num. xxiv. 16) (*Id.*, 22).

especially on the far-famed temples of the land of his fathers to which he was now returning—the tower-temples of Ur and Hârân, under the shadow of which Abraham had spent his youth and middle-age.¹ The majestic ziggurat of the great Moon-god, “the Lord of Ur,” the not less renowned and ancient “House of Brightness” of the same deity at Hârân,² the “Eternal House” of Nebo, who was known as “the Prince of the men of Hârân,”³ must by tradition at least have been familiar to Jacob. All these gods, served by the family of Terah when they dwelt on the other side of Euphrates, were at a long subsequent time still venerated by their descendants on the soil of Palestine (Joshua xxiv. 2 and 23). Indeed their later and purer conceptions of the true God, we may conjecture, were not at first sharply differentiated and separated from the best and loftiest ideas about deity which they had been able to form in their old Babylonian days. Laban, who was still a Babylonian idolater, drew no distinction between the God of Abraham and the God of his own people, of Nahor and of Terah (Gen. xxxi. 53). It has often been remarked how closely akin the religious ideas and language of devotion were among the Hebrews and the Babylonians. A hymn of quite monotheistic sublimity to “the Lord of Ur” is almost worthy to stand beside

¹ Boscauwen, *Vic. Inst. Trans.*, xvii. 253.

² *Id.*, xx. 117, 124.

³ *Id.*, xx. 117.

some of the Psalms of Israel.¹ We know that Jacob himself was looked upon as being so thoroughly Aramised from his long sojourn with "Laban the Aramean" (Gen. xxxi. 20), "Son of Bethuel the Aramean," that he is spoken of as "a wandering Aramean" (Deut. xxvi. 5), Aram being Mesopotamia.² In fact the Hebrew was an enlightened Babylonian. Merodach, otherwise called Bel, the beneficent deity to whom the tower-temples at Babylon and at Nippur were dedicated, was by the Babylonians themselves identified with the Supreme God of the Hebrews, as we may infer from the Babylonian proper name Bel-Yahu, "Bel is Yahveh" (Jehovah),³ corresponding to the Hebrew name Beal-yah (1 Chron. xii. 5). Mr. Pinches says that it is probably not going too far to say that to the initiated Babylonian and Assyrian, Merodach and Ya (Jah, Yahveh) were one and the same.⁴ This was due probably not so much to the syncretism of culture as to the simplicity which does not differentiate.

Another interesting fact tending in the same direction is this. The god Ninip, who was some-

¹ Ball, *Variorum Aids*, No. 47; Boscawen, *Monuments*, 59, 63; Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, 160; Tomkins, *Abraham*, 9.

² "The chief interest of the story of Jacob's twenty years' service with Laban lies in its reopening of the relations between the settlers in Palestine and the original tribe of Mesopotamia, which appeared on Abraham's migration to have been closed" (Stanley, *Jewish Church*, i. 61).

³ Nebo-Yah ("Nebo is Yahveh") is also found (Sayce, *Expos. Times*, vii. 266).

⁴ *Vic. Inst. Trans.*, xxviii. 13.

times identified with Anu, the god of the heavens, was associated with Bel in his temple at Nippur, "the oldest temple in the world,"¹ the builder of which was Ur-Ninip, "the man (*i.e.* votary) of Ninip."² Now Ninip by the ancient inhabitants of the East was identified with "the Most High God" of Salem or Jerusalem.³ One of his titles is "the Predecessor," perhaps meaning "the Primæval God";⁴ and according to the Tel el-Amarna tablets Bit-Ninip, "the temple of Ninip," was situated on "the Mountain of Jerusalem," where afterwards stood the Temple of Jehovah.⁵

The Vision at Bethel.

13. When the sun went down upon Jacob as he was traversing the stony fields in the neighbourhood of Luz, he lay down in the open air, and ere he resigned himself to slumber he took one of the boulders which strewed the ground and set it as a pillow beneath his head. Bethel lay in the direct thoroughfare of Palestine, and Beitin—for it preserves its ancient name with but little change—according to modern travellers, stands on the shelving point of a rocky ridge between two converging valleys which unite beneath it. All the locality around is terribly stony

¹ It was also called "the House of En-lil" (= "Lord of the Storm"), *i.e.* Bel (Peters, *Nippur*, ii. 129).

² *Id.*, i. 27. ³ Pinches, *Vic. Inst. Trans.*, xxviii. 17. ⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Sayce, *Expos. Times*, ix. 33; *Pat. Palestine*, 144, 256.

and barren-looking.¹ To the East "rises—as the highest of a succession of eminences, each now marked by some vestiges of an ancient edifice—a conspicuous hill, its topmost summit resting, as it were, on the rocky slopes below."² This is "the mountain on the East of Bethel" where Abraham pitched his tent on first entering the land of Canaan (Gen. xii. 8).³ It is still thickly strewn to its top with stones formed by nature for the building of 'altar' or sanctuary."⁴ Professor Sayce tells me that when he visited Beitin he "was struck by the fact that the limestone rocks on the summit of the hill are piled one on the other like a gigantic staircase." It may well have been that "in the visions of the night the rough stones formed themselves into a vast staircase (to Jacob), reaching into the depth of the wide and open sky, which, without any interruption of tent or tree, was stretched over the sleeper's head."⁵ Thus his wondrous dream would, as is customary, have had a natural basis. The last object on which Jacob's eyes rested as the sun went down was the rocky mountain which rose above him to the east, catching the reddening rays of the golden west and towering bright and beautiful above the darkening plain,

¹ Murray, *Handbook of Syria* (1892), p. 150; Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, 217; Deane, *Abraham*, 45. ² Stanley, 218.

³ Also referred to Joshua xvi. 1; 1 Sam. xiii. 2; 2 Kings xxiii. 16 (Stanley, 17).

⁴ Grove, *Bible Dict.*, i. 199; cf. Sayce, *Pat. Palestine*, 190.

⁵ Stanley, *Jewish Church*, i. 59.

"Like the Alpine mount, that takes its name
From roseate hues, far kenne'd at morn and even." ¹

It seemed to his rapt vision like one of those terraced
temple-mounds of the ancient worship,

"The great world's altar stairs
That slope through darkness up to God." ²

The glowing summit standing out against the
deep blue sky was not unlike the golden chapel of
the storeyed tower which overtopped the city and
burned like a beacon in the rays of the evening sun :

"Ascending by degrees magnificent
Up to the wall of heaven, a structure high ;
At top whereof, but far more rich, appear'd
The work as of a kingly palace gate,
With frontispiece of diamond and gold
Imbellish'd ; thick with sparkling orient gems
The portal shone, inimitable on earth
By model or by shading pencil drawn.
The stairs were such as whereon Jacob saw
Angels ascending and descending, bands
Of guardians bright, when he from Esau fled
To Padan-Aram in the field of Luz,
Dreaming by night under the open sky,
And waking cried, 'This is the gate of heaven.' " ³

It was this stepped temple-structure of the zig-
gurat, I suggest, with its heavenward staircase that

¹ Wordsworth, *Eccles. Sonnets, Ejaculation*.

² Tennyson, *In Mem.*, lv. In one type of the Ziggurat "the front is almost entirely taken up with wide staircases" (Perrot and Chipiez, *Art in Chaldea and Assyria*, i. 372).

³ Milton, *Par. Lost*, iii. 503-15.

rose before the sleeping Jacob.¹ For the different stages or terraces were not merely connected by the inclined plain which ran parallel to the sides, but by a number of flights of steps from stage to stage which intersected these at right angles and formed one continuous ascent to the top platform.² This was the staircase which appeared thronged with the heavenly denizens. The resemblance occurred spontaneously to a modern scholar when writing thus of the childhood of Abraham: "Such must have been his thoughts: when above the darkening ziggurat, *which rose like huge stairs to heaven*, the stars would come out of the fading sky, he would be taught to mark the pole-star Dayan-Same [the Judge of Heaven] . . . and the stars of strong influence called interpreters and judges and counsellors."³

14. Similarly, Mount T'ai, the chief of the sacred mountains of China, which has been an object of veneration and worship for over four thousand years. A road rises to the central peak, the highest of three, which "*seems like a stairway to the skies*, for there are near six thousand steps of hewn stone, each fifteen feet in length, leading upward."⁴ This mountain worship is probably of Babylonian origin, like so

¹ Heath, *Phœnician Inscriptions*, i. 32; Trumbull, *Threshold Covenant*, 112.

² See the restoration of the temple of Nannar, the Moon-god, at Uru, in Maspero, *Dawn of Civilization*, 2nd ed., 629.

³ H. G. Tomkins, *Studies on the Times of Abraham*, 14.

⁴ H. C. Du Bose, *The Dragon, Image and Demon*, 274.

much of the Chinese cult.¹ Moreover, temples of the Hindu gods are often built on the summit of high hills and approached by successive flights of stone steps.² In ancient Egypt sacred places were marked by flights of steps leading up to them.³ On a stone mace found at Hierakonpolis the king, Nar-mer, is represented in a canopy at the top of such a long flight of steps.

15. As to the use of the word "ladder" here for a solid staircase, a very similar use is found in 1 Maccabees xi. 59, where the expression "The ladder (Lxx. κλίμαξ) of Tyre" is employed for a high mountain on the Syrian coast between Phoenicia and Palestine, the upper part of which is cut in zig-zags, and exceedingly steep.⁴ In the same way Shûlêm or Sûlêm (now Sôlam) is said to have received its name from *Sullâm*, a ladder, on account of its situation on a steep mountain declivity,⁵ just as "stairs" or "ladder of rock" is used in the Song of Solomon (ii. 14) for precipitous rocks.⁶ Philo thought that by Jacob's ladder was to be understood the air or atmosphere which lies between earth and

¹ See C. J. Ball, *Bib. Arch. Soc. Proc.*, xii.

² M. Williams, *Brahmanism and Hinduism*, 567.

³ Petrie, *Conscience and Religion of Anct. Egypt*, 34.

⁴ *Speaker's Comm., Apocrypha*, ii. 496. In the Highlands "The Devil's Staircase" is the name of the spot where the road winds its way, in seventeen zigzags, up the steep side of Corriearrack. See also Burton and Drake, *Unexplored Syria*, i. 6.

⁵ Lange, *Comm. Old Test.*, x. 114.

⁶ See Delitzsch and Lange, *in loco*. So κλίμακωδς is used by Polybius for terraced, storeyed.

heaven,¹ with some reference perhaps to the storeyed clouds when

“The King of the East slowly lifts
His golden feet on those empurpled stairs
That climb into the windy halls of heaven.”²

With pretty much the same idea, Lincolnshire folk speak of the rays of the sun falling through a cloud and seeming to touch the earth, as “Jacob’s Stee” (=ladder).³

16. In the religious system of the ancient Egyptians the Osiris, or the incorporeal and immortal part of a man, was believed to mount to heaven by means of a ladder, the nature of which is unexplained. Thus the Osiris of King Pepi I. in his pyramid exclaims,⁴ “Hail to thee, O Ladder of God . . .

¹ On *Dreams being sent from God*, ch. xxii.

“Each stair mysteriously was meant, nor stood
There always, but drawn up to heaven sometimes
Viewless” (Milton, *Par. Lost*, iii. 515-17).

² Tennyson, *Lucretius*. Exactly the same imagery is found in a Babylonian tablet, where it is said that the Sun-god “opens the great gates” of the East, and ascending to the zenith “in his majesty he made himself steps there” (Lenormant, *Beginnings of Hist.*, 496).

On a Babylonian seal the Sun-god is represented as stepping upwards on apparently a temple-tower in four stages (Ball, *Aids to Bible Student*, fig. 111).

³ Peacock, *Manly and Corringham Glossary*, i. 292. I am inclined to think that “ladder” formerly, like Lat. *scala*, denoted also a flight of stairs. Quarles, in his *School of the Heart*, 1635, represents a ladder by stepped verses (p. 116, ed. 1865).

⁴ Budge, *Book of the Dead*, p. lxxi. The gods who presided over this ladder to heaven were Rā (sun) and Horus (the rising sun) (Id.).

Stand up, O Ladder of God! Every *Khu* (Spirit) and every god stretcheth out his hand unto this Pepi when he cometh forth into heaven by the Ladder of God. . . . Every *Khu* and every god stretcheth out his hand unto Pepi on the Ladder." We may conjecture that it denoted the bright beams of the rising sun darting towards the zenith and indicating the bright path by which the victorious god (Horus) ascends the skies. The path of the resuscitated sun and of the soul is the same.¹

The Summit of the Ladder.

17. In the vision it seemed to Jacob that the Lord (Jahveh) stood above the staircase, the top of which reached to heaven, and spoke with him, revealing Himself as the God of his fathers, promising that the land whereon he was then lying should eventually become the possession of his descendants, and assuring him of His continued protection (vv. 13-15). Now the summit of the terraced ziggurat, as we have already seen, was occupied by the shrine or sanctuary of the deity; there the chief watcher kept his nightly vigils, scanning the starry skies, and received the divine oracle; and there the god was believed to reveal himself to his favoured worshipper. In this detail also the correspondence of the vision with the Babylonian belief is complete. The Holy of Holies into which the god descended from time to

¹ Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, 343.

time was called the *parak* or *paráku*, and this same term meets us afterwards in connection with the Tabernacle of Israel in the form of *pároket*h (Exod. xxvi. 31), the veil which separated off (*párah*) the Holy place from the Holiest of all where the presence of the Lord was manifested.¹ Thus the top of that stony hill at Bethel, touching the pure skies,

“And visited all night by troops of stars,”

seemed to the awed and solitary wayfarer the veritable presence-chamber of the Unseen Being, and it lifted his thoughts from earth to things eternal.

“The Peak is high and flush’d

At its highest with ‘sunset’ fire ;

The Peak is high, and the stars are high,

And the thought of man is higher.”²

The North Star the Abode of Deity.

18. There was a further and more special reason why the summit of the religious mound was held sacred to the Deity. The ziggurat proper, as we have seen, represented originally the peak of the world mountain which lay directly beneath the

¹ The Tabernacle and the Temple with their courts and chambers of graduated sanctity, culminating in the Holy of Holies, might seem to be the perpendicular ziggurat reduced to a horizontal ground-plan for convenience of erection.

■ Tennyson, *The Voice and the Peak*, viii.

“So, like the mountain, may we grow more bright
From unimpeded commerce with the sun,
At the approach of all-involving night”

(Wordsworth, *Ejaculation*).

northern axis of the planetary vault. Thus it denoted fundamentally the pivot or fixed point around which the universe revolved. Mêru was at one and the same time the highest part of the terrestrial world, and the central point of the visible heaven, both the North Pole and the centre of the habitable earth.

There is abundant evidence—though I cannot find that it has been brought together hitherto—of an ancient belief, widespread among many nations, that this central point of rest was the dwelling-place of the Supreme Spirit, from which he exercised a controlling power over all his works as they circled in their orbits round his throne. Accordingly the North Star,

“ The stedfast starre
That was in Ocean waves yet never wet
But firme is fixt, and sendeth light from farre
To al that in the wide deepe wandering arre,”¹

as it alone of the heavenly bodies never failed in its light nor altered its position, became a symbol of Him who changeth not (Mal. iii. 6), “the Father of lights with whom is no variableness (parallax) nor shadow produced by turning” (S. James i. 17), who Himself abiding in perfect repose presides over and directs an ever-changing universe :

“ A star that with the choral starry dance
Join'd not, but stood, and standing saw
The hollow orb of moving Circumstance
Roll'd round by one fix'd law.”²

¹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, I. ii. 1.

² Tennyson, *Palace of Art*.

Or, as a mediæval poet once expressed the same thought,

“Aethereus motus movet omnia sidera, praeter
Unum, sed semper permanet illud idem ;
Sic constans et fidus homo sine fine tenebit
Hunc in more modum quem tenet ipse polus.”¹

A variety of names, significant of this divine pre-eminence, were given to the Pole Star by Babylonian astronomers, a subject to which a special treatise in Sargon's library (3800 B.C.) was devoted.² One such name was Dayan-Samê, “the Judge of Heaven”;³ another was “the Star of Anu, the arbiter of heaven,”⁴ Anu being the supreme god of the sky, who organised the heavens and determines the movements of the stars. Jensen, noting that Anu represents the Pole in astronomy, quotes from the “Codex Nasaræus,” “Sedens ille in aquilone alto, imperans, gloriosus, eminens, basis omnium lucentium et pater omnium geniorum.”⁵ Thus the ancient Assyrians recognised “the Supreme Ruler as dwelling in the centre of all the revolutions of the stars ; the most perfect leader of the most perfect (sidereal) chariot.”⁶ The North Star apparently was also called by them “the star of

¹ Alanus de Insulis, *Parabolæ*, ch. 2.

² Sumeru, the sacred Mount of the Hindus, is the North Pole and also the residence of the gods (Duncan Forbes).

³ *Soc. Bibl. Archæology Trans.*, iii. 206.

⁴ Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, 291 ; Hommel, *Anct. Heb. Trad.*, 25.

⁵ *Kosmologie der Babylonier*, pp. 22, 23 ; Hommel, *Anct. Heb. Trad.*, 25.

⁶ Grotefend in W. B. Barker, *Lares and Penates*, 225.

the flock of many sheep of the Spirit of Heaven," the stars being the flock tended and led by it as the shepherd of the sky.¹ In a Babylonian star-list it is mentioned as "the star of the crossers of the sea."²

"Chaldean shepherds, ranging trackless fields,
Beneath the concave of unclouded skies
Spread like a sea, in boundless solitude,
Looked on the polar star, as on a guide
And guardian of this course, that never closed
His steadfast eye."

19. It is interesting to find that the Sabians, or Star-worshippers who dwell at Hârân and along the banks of the Euphrates, and are the survivors and modern representatives of the ancient Babylonian magi, still turn to the North, as the region of mysterious awe, in prayer. The great object of their adoration is the North Star. Their priest in sacrificing keeps his eyes fixed upon it, and the worshippers prostrate themselves to the ground before it. It is "the world of light," the paradise of the elect, and the abode of the pious hereafter.³ "Blessed be the

¹ Boscawen, *From under the Dust of Ages*, 47. Cf. Ps. cxlvii. 4, also the Assyrian star-name Sib-zi-anna, "Shepherd of the heavenly flock" (*Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, iii. 173, 178). In a planisphere under seven dots [= the Great Bear] is written "Bel who goes before the star" (*Id.*, 172). A Servian song speaks of a leading star "who walks athwart the sky as a shepherd before his white lambs" (Grimm, *Teut. Myth.*, 1506).

² Boscawen, *Vic. Inst. Trans.*, xx. 114.

³ See a full and curious article on these Star-worshippers in the *Standard*, Oct. 18, 1894, p. 6. They are variously known as Sabians ("Washers"), Mandæans, Christians of S. John, and

primitive light, the ancient light, the Divinity self-created!" cries the priest as he extends his hands towards the Polar Star and lets a pigeon fly. Mr. S. Lane-Poole reports these Sabians as believing that the Pole Star is at the apex of heaven, before the door of Abāthur, the Father of Angels, and therefore that it is the Kibla to which the face must be turned in prayer, and towards which their churches must be "oriented" in building.¹

20. In exactly the same manner, according to Arab writers, the Sabæans (who are not to be confounded with the above-mentioned Sabians) used to turn to the North during their devotions, and Mr. Palgrave found this ancient custom still partially observed by the Arabs of 'Omān, by whom the North Star is called Yāh.² This name, upon which he makes no comment, is of extreme interest, as it is, no doubt, a survival of the old Semitic Jah (as in Ps. lxxviii. 4) or Jahveh (Jehovah). The conception underlying this appellation is suggested by another name which these same Arabs give to the North Star—viz. Mismār, which means "The Yezidis or Izedis: see *Ethnolog. Soc. Trans.*, 1861, i. 36; Lane-Poole, *Studies in a Mosque*, 264; Sale, *Koran, Prelim. Disc.*, 10; Siouffi, *Études sur la Religion des Soubbas ou Sabéens*; Chwolsohn, *Sabier und Sabismus*; Norberg, *Book of Adam*; *Vic. Inst. Trans.*, April 1898.

¹ *Studies in a Mosque*, 272, 279, 283.

² W. G. Palgrave, *Central and East Arabia*, ii. 263. Tatian, the Assyrian, referring to the seven planets, says: "Instead of wandering ('planetary') demons we have learned to know one Lord who wanders not" (*Address to the Greeks*, ch. ix.).

Nail,"¹ exactly corresponding to its Turkish name, Temir Kazik, "Iron Peg,"² and denoting the fixed point which stands firm and immovable.³ In this respect it is the one heavenly object which fitly symbolises the eternal duration and unchangeableness of the Supreme Being, the bright beacon which, by its unmoving steadfastness in the midst of a world of unceasing change, is the highest type of immutability.

"O Strength and Stay upholding all creation,
Who ever dost Thyself unmoved abide,
Yet day by day the light in due gradation
From hour to hour through all its changes guide."⁴

¹ Palgrave, *l.c.*

² Vámbéry, *Travels in Central Asia*, 90. Compare also as names of the Pole Star, Lapp. *tjuold*, "the Stake"; American, *ichka chagatha*, "the star that goes not"; Icel. *hiara-stjarna* (Grimm, *Teut. Myth.*, 1507); Chinese, "the pivot" (Douglas, *Confucianism and Taoism*, 278).

³ I question whether *Mismâr*, also applied to the Pole Star in Damascus (Wetzstein), is not used like Heb. *Mismâr* in the sense of guard or commander (as in Ezek. xxxviii. 7), just as Arab. *Kutb* is a pole or axis and also a civil or political chief (Lane, *Thousand and One Nights*, i. 208). Compare Dante, speaking of the Angelic hierarchy,

"Io sentiva osannar di coro in coro
Al punto fisso, che gli tiene all' ubi
E terrà sempre, nel qual sempre foro"

(*Paradiso*, xxviii. 94-97).

"Then heard I echoing on, from choir to choir,
'Hosanna,' to the fixed point, that holds,
And shall for ever hold them to their place,
From everlasting, irremovable" (Carey).

⁴ Rev. John Ellerton; cf. S. Ambrose's hymn, "Aeterne

21. In China we find the same veneration for the Pole Star. It is called T'ien-hwang-ta-ti, "the great imperial Ruler of Heaven," who regulates heaven, earth, and man,"¹ and the name Tay-ye, "the Great Unity," which is applied to the Deity, is given also to the North Star, as the special seat of God.² According to Laou-tsze, the North is the place where resides the Prince of the Stars of the North, and the North Pole is the hinge of heaven. If one dares to weep or spit towards the North he outrages the gods and profanes their presence.³ Confucius used to turn in devotion to the constellation of the Bushel of the North, the Prince of Spirits, who holds sway over

rerum conditor, Noctem diemque qui regis" (Trench, *Sac. Latin Poetry*, 243). Clement of Alexandria has a similar passage. Tragedy, discoursing of Nature, says :

"Unwearied Time circles full in perennial flow
Producing itself. And the twin bears
On the swift wandering motions of their wings
Keep the Atlantean pole."

And Atlas, "the unsuffering" ($\alpha\text{-}\tau\lambda\alpha\varsigma$) pole, may mean the fixed sphere, or better, perhaps, motionless eternity (*Works*, Ante-Nic. Lib., ii. 242).

With this may be compared in Sanskrit, "Time, like a seven-wheeled, seven-naved car, moves on. His rolling wheels are all the world, his axle Is immortality" (*Atharveda*, xix. 53; M. Williams, *Indian Wisdom*, 25).

¹ Dennys, *Folk-lore of China*, 119; J. Edkins, *Religion in China*, 109.

² Baring-Gould, *Origin of Relig. Belief*, i. 100. It is compounded of *ta*, great, and *yih*, one (M. Müller, *Science of Religion*, 195; Chalmers, *Structure of Chinese Characters*, 1).

³ R. K. Douglas, *Confucianism and Taouism*, 268; Bettany *Prim. Religion*, 231.

men.¹ It is by participating in Tâo, the divine harmony and order by which heaven and earth exist, that Yü-Khiang, the Spirit of the North, was set on the North Pole, and that Wei-tâu, the Great Bear, from all eternity has made no eccentric movement.² The presiding deity of the Pole Star, called the Bushel Mother, is the star of hope and the heart of the Taoist religion.³ Quite similar is the Japanese belief that the Lord of Heaven, as centre of the universe, is figured by the Pole Star.⁴ The fundamental idea in these conceptions may have been inherited from the ancient Babylonians.

22. Turning now to the sacred books of the Parsees, we find sacrifices offered to Haptôiringa (Ursa Major) as the leader of the stars in the North in their warfare against the demons and powers of evil.⁵ The same seems to be referred to in *T'ir Yasht* (p. 105), "We sacrifice to the bright and glorious star that washeth away all things of fear, whom the Lord Omniscient hath established as the lord and overseer of all stars."⁶

¹ Douglas, 258, 269.

² *Writings of Kwang-tsze, Sacred Books of China*, i. 245. The word for the North Star consists of the character *yao*, brightness, and another, meaning animal soul (Id., ii. 318).

³ Du Bose, *The Dragon, Image, and Demon*, 410. Hsing-chu, the "Lord of the Stars," resides in a star near the Pole known by his name (Dennys, *Folk-lore of China*, 119).

⁴ *Saturday Review*, vol. 64, p. 149.

⁵ *Zend-Avesta*, ed. Darmesteter, ii. 97.

⁶ In C. L. Brace, *The Unknown God*, 195. Compare in the Book of Enoch, "I saw chariots in heaven, running in the world,

In like manner the Supreme God among the Hindus is throned on Mêru, which is at once the North Pole and the centre of the habitable earth; just as Alborj of the Parsees, the Harâ-Berezaiti of the Zend-Avesta, which is the pole and world-centre, is also the abode of the gods.¹

In later Sanskrit literature there was a legend that a young Prince Dhruva, "Firm," on account of the constancy of his faith in Bhagavat, was translated to the Polar Star as the one fixed and constant point in the shifting heavens, where he might dwell nearest to Bhagavat, the Supreme Spirit, whom he adored. Hence the Polar Star itself was called Dhruva.² With the same idea, at the conclusion of a Hindu wedding the priest leads the bride out under the open sky, and points her to the North Star as the emblem of stability, and bids her to be as constant to her husband as *it* is to its place in the heavens.³ So Shakspeare :

"I am as constant as the northern star
Of whose true fixt and resting quality
There is no fellow in the firmament."⁴

above and below these portals, in which the stars that never set [? the Great Bear] turn. And *One is greater than all* [? the North Star], and this one courses through the whole world" (ch. lxxv. 8, 9, ed. Schodde).

¹ Lenormant, *Cont. Rev.*, Sept. 1881, 457, 458, 461.

² C. J. Stone, *Christianity before Christ*, 90, 161; *Harivansa*, ed. Langlois, i. 8.

³ J. Samuelson, *India Past and Present*, 57; M. Williams, *Indian Wisdom*, 200; Colebrooke, *Miscell. Essays*, i. 224; Padfield, *The Hindu at Home*, 132. ⁴ *Julius Cæsar*, iii. 1, 58-60.

Finally, the Dakotas of North America believe that Heyoka, the god who rules the seasons, dwells on a mountain near the North Star.¹

This widely diffused superstition may have some bearing on the Jewish notion that God in some special sense had His dwelling in the North. See Appendix.

The Angelic Host.

23. In addition to the supreme manifestation of the God of his fathers, revealed as standing above on the height of the temple-mount, Jacob also saw in his vision a multitude of angels, ascending and descending upon the steps which led up to the heavenly summit. This is the first place where mention is made of a company or band of angels, the angelic host as distinct from the Maleâch Jehovah, the Angel of the Lord, or Divine Agent, occurring in the previous chapters, and from the two or three individual angels (one of whom is apparently the

¹ Brinton, *Myths of the New World*, 95. Cf. "Every change must have a cause beyond the North Star, as well as on the earth" (J. Cook, *Heredity*, 17). It is curious to find a Norfolk peasant using the same figure for inscrutable wisdom: "Gladstone's as deep as the Pole Star, he is! . . . I've heard tell o' the Pole Star as the deep 'un ever sin' I was a booy" (A. Jessopp, *Trials of a Country Parson*, 41). The old belief crops up too in the extravagant greeting offered to Cardinal Pole at Canterbury by Archdeacon Harpsfield: "Thou art Pole! and thou art to us as the Polar Star, opening to us the Kingdom of Heaven."

Divine Angel Himself¹) who appeared to Lot and to Abraham. It is, of course, possible that the existence of such a host of spiritual beings passing between heaven and earth may have been a matter of direct revelation to the patriarchs ; but, even apart from that, they would naturally, and in any case, have inherited some such belief from the religious ideas of their Babylonian ancestors. Long centuries before the emigration of the sons of Terah a hierarchy of angels and evil spirits, graduated into classes, was an essential part of the ancient Chaldeo-Babylonian system.² Even in the more primitive religion of the Akkadians, elementary spirits (Zi) were believed to be dispersed everywhere through the starry heavens, the earth, and the intermediate regions of the air ; they produced and directed all the phenomena of nature.³ One class of these were the Annuna-ki, the spirits of earth,⁴ corresponding, perhaps, to the ascending angels here, and the Igigi, or spirits who

¹ Kurtz, *Hist. of Old Covenant*, 41. The angels at Bethel, moreover, are not charged with any message to man ; they are essentially angels of state to add dignity to the Divine Manifestation (W. R. Smith, *Relig. of the Semites*, 417). The Rabbins held that they expostulated with Jacob for going asleep at Bethel ! (Edersheim, *Jesus the Messiah*, ii. 751).

■ Lenormant, *Beginnings of Hist.*, 322 ; Schrader, *Hollenf. der Istar*, 102.

³ Lenormant, *Chald. Magic*, 144.

■ It is the Annuna-ki that bring in the flood upon the earth in the Babylonian tablets (Sayce, *Fresh Light from the Monuments*, 36 ; Schrader, *Cuneiform Insc. and the Old Test.*, i. 57 ; Lenormant, *Chald. Magic*, 148).

have their dwelling in heaven, answering to the descending angels. Lenormant, indeed, translates the latter word "archanges célestes." In a Hymn to Marduk occurs the line, "The archangels (Igigi) of the legions of heaven and of the earth."¹ Each of the Assyrian gods had his *shukkallu*, or angel, who played the part of mediator for purposes of communication between him and his worshipper.²

In a Chaldean Hymn to the Sun the worshipper says:

"In the great door of the shining heavens, when thou openest it,
In the highest (summits) of the shining heavens, at the time of
thy rapid course,
The *celestial archangels* with respect and joy press around
thee";³

while in another hymn to the same deity "the archangels of the earth" are said to "contemplate eagerly his face."⁴

Similarly in the famous Hymn to the Moon-god of Ur (which Abraham may once have sung) occurs a passage which Assyriologists agree in translating as follows:

"As for thee, thy word is proclaimed in heaven, and the *angels*
bow their faces;
As for thee, thy word is proclaimed on earth, and the *spirits*
below kiss the ground."⁵

¹ Lenormant, *Beginnings of History*, 315. Igigi, perhaps from Assyrian *agagu*, to be powerful (Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, 141), like Heb. *Abbirim*, "mighty ones" = angels (Ps. lxxviii. 25).

² Lenormant, 128. ³ *Record of the Past*, xi. 125. ⁴ Id., 123.

⁵ Boscawen, *Bible and the Monuments*, 60; Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, 161; Ball, *Aids to Bible Students*, 37; Brace, *The Unknown God*, 65.

Here again the spirits from above and from below, corresponding to the ascending and descending angels, are brought together. In the earliest times the Assyrian "Host of Heaven" (Kissat Shamie) was divided into similar component elements—An-Sar, "the Heaven Host," and Ki-Sar, "the Earth Host," the former consisting of the Igigi, the latter of the Annuna-ki.¹ A Hymn to Merodach says:

"All the angel-host of heaven and earth
(Regard) thee and (give) ear" ■

The apparent course of the stars, as some rise and mount towards the zenith while others tend downwards to their setting, may have first suggested a corresponding movement of the celestial spirits.

Another Babylonian hymn addresses Marduk as "the great overseer of the spirits of heaven,"³ and Nebo as "the overseer of the angel-hosts of heaven and earth."⁴

24. It is certainly a significant fact that there is no mention of angels till after the call of Abraham.⁵

¹ Boscawen, *The Bible and the Monuments*, 46.

² Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, 99.

³ *Ibid.*, 517.

⁴ *Id.*, 115.

■ The cherubim of Gen. iii. 24 are also a Babylonian conception (Lenormant, *Beginnings*, 89, 126). The "Morning stars" which sang at the creation (Job xxxviii. 7) are from the same source, the stars being identified with angels (*cf.* Kalisch, *Levit.* ii. 286, 309). The "Sons of God" or angels who wedded the daughters of men (Gen. vi. 2) are part of a Chaldeo-Babylonian tradition (but see Davis, *Genesis and Semitic Tradition*, 101).

They and the converted man from Ur make their appearance in the sacred narrative together, from which fact we might be warranted in inferring that already, before his call, they constituted a part of his religious possessions and spiritual outfit. It is well known that the Jews in later times had a tradition that their knowledge of the angels was to some extent derived from Babylon, and it is indisputable that the Babylonian tablets reveal a most ancient belief in the existence of a multitude of spiritual beings intermediate between God and the world.¹ It is remarkable, too, that post-Biblical writers, in developing their angelology and demonology, always fell back upon the Babylonians for their materials. Accordingly, Dr. Kalisch, in a learned excursus on the doctrine of angels and spirits, comes to the conclusion that the Hebrew belief in angels was due to a compromise with paganism, and was introduced from the region of the Euphrates and Tigris, where this doctrine was luxuriantly developed, especially among the Persians. Most probably, however, it was a part of the primi-

¹ The chief messenger who carried the comments of the gods to earth was Pap-shukal (Sayce, *Expos. Times*, ix. 31; Lenormant, *Beginnings*, 225). One tablet speaks of Nasku (the Fire-god) as "Superintendent of the freewill offerings of all the spirits" (Igigi), and mentions the "angel messenger (*sukkal*) of Anu" (Boscawen, *Expos. Times*, ix. 230).

Similarly, among the ancient Egyptians Ra does not act directly upon men, but through messengers or intermediaries; "he sent a power from heaven with the command" (Petrie, *Religion and Conscience in Anc. Egypt*, 41). So *δύναμις*=angel (Herzog, *s.v.* "Angel").

tive Semitic faith,¹ inherited alike by Hebrews and Babylonians, and by the latter imparted to the Zoroastrians.

25. The early Semites regarded the stars with superstitious veneration, as spiritual beings who pursued their heavenly courses in conscious obedience to the commands of the Supreme Ruler. Distinct traces of this belief, as we shall presently see, survive in the pages of the Bible. Indeed, to the intelligence of primeval man everything that moves, whether it be star or river or wind, is in consequence endowed with life, and as an animate creature may become an object of worship. This veneration of the planets had to be expressly forbidden to the Hebrews (Deut. iv. 19). The ancient Arabs paid adoration to the sun, moon, and five planets, and other brilliant stars, as manifestations of the Divine Being.³

It has been remarked that "the conception of any physical law restraining or ordering the movements of the heavenly bodies is not natural to the mind of man in a primitive state. Doubtless the stars were looked upon in the first instance as divinities possessing volition and personality. They went in their

¹ Compare W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, 427.

² Id., 127; Lenormant, *Chald. Magic*, 153; Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, 401.

³ Lenormant, *Hist. Ancienne de l'Orient*, iii. 305, 307, 354. The planets, from their periodical movements, were likened by the Akkadians to animals endowed with life, and were called *lu*, sheep (or goats) (Lenormant, *Chald. Magic*, 153; Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, 49). Similarly, Proclus says the stars are divine animals which have intellect and a soul (*On Timæus of Plato*, trans. Taylor, ii. 277).

particular course because they liked it; and there was no reason why they should not deviate from it, or move in another direction. They influenced the minds and destinies of men, and were themselves subject to interruptions in their courses, whether from the attacks of the Great Dragon (Job iii. 8) or from other causes." So "the hosts (Sabaoth) of the Lord are, in all probability, the sentient armies of heaven marshalled and directed by the constant care of Jehovah. But still they are thought of as possessing life and will of their own, and as being capable of disobedience to their Ruler."¹ Compare, in the Apocalypse of Baruch, "Thou makest the celestial orbs wise that they may minister in their ranks. Their innumerable armies stand before Thee, and quietly minister in their ranks at thy bidding (nod)" (xlviii. 9, 10). And, similarly, in the Book of Enoch: "I saw the sun and moon . . . and how they do not leave their course . . . and preserve their fidelity one with another, remaining steadfast in their oaths" (xli. 5).

A fine passage to the same purport occurs in the "Psalms of Solomon" (about 45 B.C.):

"Great is our God and glorious, dwelling in the highest, even He that hath appointed the luminaries in their course unto times of seasons from day to day; and they have not transgressed from the path which Thou didst command them.

"Even in the fear of God is their course every day,

¹ H. E. Ryle and M. R. James, *Psalms of Solomon*, p. 151.

from what day thy God created them even unto everlasting, and they have not erred since the day when He created them : from the generations of old they have not departed from their path, except God commanded them at the precept of His servants" ("Psalms of Solomon," xix. 1-4).

Again, in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs : "Sun, moon and stars do not change their order" (Nepht. γ').

Even as late as the time of Philo, the stars were still regarded as *quasi* intelligent and personal existences. "The stars are said to be animals [animate beings], and animals endowed with intelligence ; or, I might rather say, the mind of each of them is wholly and entirely virtuous, and unsusceptible of every kind of evil."¹ "The world has rulers and subjects in it ; the rulers being all the bodies which are in heaven, such as planets and fixed stars ; and the subjects being all the natures beneath the moon We must look on all those bodies in the heaven, which the outward sense regards as gods, not as independent rulers, since they are assigned the work of lieutenants, being by their intrinsic nature responsible to a higher power." "They are the viceroys of one Supreme Being, the Father of All, in imitation of whom they administer with propriety and success the charge committed to their care."² With a similar

¹ Philo, *On the Creation of the World*, ch. 24.

² Id., *On Monarchy*, bk. i. ch. 1. Dante seems to have regarded the angels as stars when he says :

personification, Isaiah represents the Almighty as every evening, like a mighty general, reading the roll-call of his heavenly army, and each star, as it comes out, answering promptly to its name. "Lift up your eyes on high, and see who hath created these, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by name; by the greatness of His might, and for that He is strong in power, not one is lacking"¹—not one lags behind, as the words imply, like a sheep that is missed from the flock. The same beautiful metaphor is used by the Apocryphal writers: "The stars shined in their watches, and rejoiced; when He calleth them they say, 'Here we be'; and so with cheerfulness they shewed light unto Him that made them."² "At the command of the Holy One,

"Di color d'oro, in che raggio traluce,
 Vid' io uno scalèo eretto in suso
 Tanto, che nol seguiva la mia luce,
 Vidi anche per li gradi scender giuso
 Tanti splendor, ch' io pensai ch' ogni lume,
 Che par nel ciel, quindi fosse diffuso"
 (*Paradiso*, xxi. 29-33).

"Coloured like gold, on which the sunshine gleams,
 A stairway I beheld to such a height
 Uplifted, that mine eye pursued it not.
 Likewise beheld I down the steps descending
 So many splendours, that I thought each light
 That in the heaven appears was there diffused"
 (Longfellow).

¹ Isaiah xl. 26.

² Baruch iii. 34; cf. Apuleius, "Tibi respondent sidera; gaudent lumina"—*Metamorph.*, p. 257 (1635); Book of Enoch, lxi. 43; G. Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, i. 344.

they [the stars] stand in their order, and never faint in their watches."¹ The Babylonians had formed a like idea of the military subordination of the heavenly host. The Creator, in the Assyrian tablets, instructs the stars not to transgress or do wrong by wandering from their appointed places, as by so doing they would be guilty of sin.

"He founded dwellings for the divine planets, for their rising and setting,

That nothing should act wrong² nor anything stop still."³

This and the other passages given above are illustrated by the following comment of Origen: "Job appears to assert that not only may the stars be subject to sin, but even that they are not clear from the contagion of it. The following are his words: 'The stars also are not clean in Thy sight' (xxv. 5). Nor is this to be understood of the splendour of their physical substance. We think that they may be designated as living beings for this reason, that they are said to receive commandments from God, which is ordinarily the case only with rational beings. 'I have given commandments to all the stars'

¹ Eccclus. xliii. 10; cf. "The sentinel stars set their watch in the sky" (Campbell, *The Soldier's Dream*).

² "Act wrong," *anni*=Heb. *avon*, sin.

³ *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, v. 435. Compare "The sun and moon and *choirs of stars* according to His appointment roll round their prescribed bounds in harmony, without any transgression" (Clement of Rome, 1 *Cor.* xx.). So the Liturgy of S. James: "To God the Heavens sing praise and all their powers, the sun and moon, and the whole *choir of stars*."

(Isa. xlv. 12), says the Lord. Those, namely, that each star, in its order and course, should bestow upon the world the amount of splendour which has been entrusted to it. For those which are called 'planets' move in orbits of one kind, and those which are termed 'fixed' are different. Now it manifestly follows from this, that neither can the movement of that body take place without a soul, nor can living things be at any time without motion. And seeing that the stars move with such order and regularity, that their movements never appear to be at any time subject to derangement, would it not be the height of folly to say that so orderly an observance of method and plan could be carried out or accomplished by irrational beings? Yet, if the stars are living and rational beings, there will undoubtedly appear among them both an advance and a falling back, for the language of Job, 'the stars are not clean in His sight,' seems to me to convey some such idea."¹ A more obvious passage, in which the stars are spoken of as conscious agents or ministers of God, and virtually identified with the angels, is that in Job :

"When the morning stars sang together,
And all the sons of God shouted for joy" (xxxviii. 7).

The same mysterious connection is attested in many other parts of Scripture. Both stars and

¹ Origen, *De Principiis*, bk. i. ch. 2, 3. Maimonides and the Rabbis shared the same belief, that the stars were sentient and intelligent beings (Kalisch, *Leviticus*, ii. 309).

angels are comprehended in the phrase "host of heaven," the Hebrew *sěbā'ōth*, "hosts," a word akin to the Babylonian *sābu*, which denotes both a warrior and a star.¹ Similarly the stars, like an arm of a well-organised army, fight against the enemies of God's people, in the Book of Judges (v. 20). Sometimes they renounced their allegiance, like the rebel angels, and were punished by being fettered in a heavenly prison. So Merodach, after his victory over Tiāmat, punished the defection of some of the heavenly host by casting them into chains and prison. "They bear their sin, they are kept in bondage." "Over the gods in bondage he strengthened his watch."² With this Professor Sayce³ has very aptly compared a curious passage in Isaiah (xxiv. 21, 22), "In that day the Lord shall visit [punishment] upon the host of the height on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the dungeon, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited." But this judgment upon the stars is a judgment upon the angels also, "which kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, and are kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6; compare "wandering stars for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved for ever," v. 13, and

¹ Jensen, in *Expos. Times*, ix. 284; Ewald, *Hist. of Israel*, i. 73; Lightfoot, *Works*, iv. 199; Kalisch, *Leviticus*, ii. 286.

² Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, 382, 383.

³ Id., 395.

2 Peter ii. 4). The natural basis of this conception is doubtless the phenomenon of falling stars, which seem to shoot madly from their spheres, and are extinguished in darkness, just as the King of Babylon, when cast down into Hades, is likened to the Morning Star fallen from the sky (Isa. xiv. 12).¹ The Book of Enoch has several passages which illustrate the identification of the stars with the angels, such as the following: "There [in the abyss] I saw a terrible thing; seven stars, like great burning mountains and like Spirits, that petitioned me. The Angel said: 'This is the place of the consummation of heaven and earth; it is a prison for the stars of heaven, and for the host of heaven. And the stars that roll over the fire are they who have transgressed the command of God before their rising, because they did not come forth in their time. And He was enraged at them, and bound them till the time of the consummation of their sins in the year of the mystery'" (ch. xviii. 13-15). "These are of the stars who have transgressed the command of God, the Highest, and are bound here till ten thousand

¹ The belief of another primitive people, the North American Indians, that the stars are a gentle folk, and when seen coming to earth at night are about to visit their earthly brides, may, perhaps, throw some light on the strange Hebrew tradition about the sons of God (or angels) wedding the daughters of men (Gen. vi. 2). Cf. R. Brown, *Races of Mankind*, i. 132. The Chinese say that the youngest of the seven stars, who are goddesses, came down and married a cowherd (J. H. Gray, *China*, i. 263).

worlds, the number of the days of their sins, shall have been consummated." Hard by this "is the prison of the angels, and here they are held to eternity" (xxi. 6 and 10).

This doctrine may probably be traced back to the astro-theological beliefs of the Babylonians. Thus, Theophilus of Antioch, about the middle of the second century, writes: "The disposition of the stars contains a type of the arrangement and order of the righteous and pious, and of those who keep the law and commandments of God. . . . And those again which change their position, and flee from place to place, which also are called 'planets' [wanderers], they, too, are a type of the man who has wandered from God, abandoning His law and commandments."¹

26. The doctrine of mediating spirits between God and man seems to have been the common heritage of the Semites, which dates back to anti-Biblical times, and probably came to them from the Babylonians. Those most ancient astronomers, according to the statement of Diodorus (ii. 30), held that under the five planets are thirty stars, called "counsellor deities" (*θεοὶ βουλαῖοι*); half of which dwell above, half below, the earth, watching respectively over things celestial and human, and between these passes to and fro "a messenger of the stars." These are sup-

¹ *To Autolytus*, i. 15 (Clark, Ante-Nic. Lib., 82). Similarly Tatian, the Assyrian, when converted to Christianity, in ridiculing the worship of the stars, says: "Instead of wandering (planetary) demons we have learned to know one Lord who wanders not" (*Address to the Greeks*, ch. ix.).

posed to be the same beings that Nebuchadnezzar refers to as "the watchers" in the Book of Daniel (iv. 17), identified by the Hebrews with the angels, whom they also regarded as "counsellors of the Almighty."¹ There were also twelve "lords of the gods" presiding each over one sign of the Zodiac. Through these signs the seven planets have their course, exercising a potent influence on the destinies of men. On these Babylonian ideas the angelology of the Rabbins was founded. They taught that there were twelve "Massaloth" or signs of the Zodiac, each having thirty chiefs of the angel army, each chief thirty legions, each legion thirty leaders, with thirty captains under them,² all created for the sake of Israel. According to Diodorus, the Chaldæans gave the name of "interpreters" (ἑρμηνεῖς) to the five planets, of which the chief and most important was El (= Saturn), because "they interpret to men the goodwill of the gods." Those with the sun and moon constitute the seven interpreting planets of the Babylonian tablets. The "angel-interpreter" of Job (xxxiii. 23) may be compared. The Chaldæans thus, by connecting terrestrial with celestial things, established, as Philo observes,³

¹ Edersheim, *Jesus the Messiah*, ii. 749. ² Ibid., ii. 746.

³ *De Migrat. Abrahami*, ch. 32. Mr. R. Brown thinks that the sacred circular dance of the maidens of Artemis (Kallistô) may have been imitative of the eternal choric stellar dance performed around the central and highest throne, the sacred spot occupied by the Pole-star (in Akkadian *Tir-anna*, "The Judge of Heaven") (*Semitic Influence in Hellenic Mythology*, 70).

a mutual sympathy and harmony between heaven and earth :

“ The planetary five
 With a submissive reverence they beheld ;
 Watched, from the centre of their sleeping flocks,
 Those radiant Mercuries, that seemed to move
 Carrying through ether, in perpetual round,
 Decrees and resolutions of the gods ;
 And by their aspects signifying works
 Of dim futurity, to man revealed.
 The imaginative faculty was lord
 Of observations natural ; and, thus
 Led on, those shepherds made report of stars
 In set rotation passing to and fro,
 Between the orbs of our apparent sphere
 And its invisible counterpart, adorned
 With answering constellations, under earth,
 Removed from all approach of living sight,
 But present to the dead ; who, so they deemed,
 Like those celestial messengers beheld
 All accidents, and judges were of all.”¹

27. Though Zoroastrianism no doubt came under Babylonian influence, it is a much controverted question as to how far the Izeds or Yazatas (“ the worshipful ones ”) of the Zend-Avesta are to be identified with the angels, or the seven Amshaspands (Ameshaspentas, “ the Holy Immortals ”) with the seven archangels of apocryphal writers, which some prefer to associate with the “ seven spirits ” of Babylonian mythology.² In the Book of Tobit, Raphael is one

¹ Wordsworth, *The Excursion*, bk. iv.

² J. M. Fuller, *Speaker's Comm.*, *Apocrypha*, ii. 173 ; M. Müller, *Psychological Religion*, 187. The angels which, according to the Talmudic saying, came up with the Jews from Babylon, Prof.

of "the seven holy angels which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One" (xii. 15). The Yazatas as genii of light are one with the stars who fight for Ahura-Mazda against the spirit of evil; though it is only by being associated with Ahura-Mazda, the good spirit, that, strictly speaking, the Amesha-spentas can be counted as seven, as they are six in number. But a similar difference of enumeration as to the archangels occurs in Philo and the Book of Enoch (90, 21). The Izedis of modern Assyria still venerate seven angels who exercise a great influence over the world: Gabrael, Michael, Raphael, Azrael, Dedrael, Azraphael, and Shemkeel.¹ Possibly this belief may have originated in the conception of the Divine Polar Star, round which the seven stars of the Great Bear revolve like attendant spirits. From this source certainly come the Seven Rishis of the Brahmans, which were reported to revolve round the summit of the world-mountain, and also, according to Lenormant, the seven Mazdean Amesha-spentas.² In the "Book of the Dead," moreover, the Great Bear is called "the seven spirits who follow their Lord" (Renouf).

At all events, the sun, moon and stars were regarded by the Jews as pre-eminently the "host of

Cheyne is disposed to identify with the Persian fravashis (*Origin of the Psalter*, 282), or archetypal spirits, which seems also to be the meaning of angel in Acts xii. 15 (see Olshausen, *in loco*).

¹ *Ethnolog. Soc. Trans.*, i. 25 (1861).

² *Cont. Rev.*, Sept. 1881, p. 463; M. Williams, *Indian Wisdom*, 201, 497.

heaven," "the powers of the Lord" ("Song of the Three Children," 39-41; cf. Ps. cxlviii. 2, 3), which bless and praise Him, as spiritual beings

"for ever singing as they shine
The hand that made us is divine." ¹

These constituted the *Sabaoth*, or celestial army of which Jahveh is the Lord, a name sometimes confused with *sheba*, the cosmic seven.² So "the seven stars are seven angels" in the Revelation (i. 20), with indirect reference perhaps to the seven planets, just as in the old Babylonian writing a star is the character which represents *ilu*, god (Heb. *Elohim*, angels).

28. In the later Jewish theology God was supposed to have His dwelling-place in the centre of a seven-fold heaven graduating to a summit, on the highest point of which was the Throne of His Glory. There, withdrawn within the veil (Talmudic *pargod*, equivalent to *pâroketh*, the separating veil of the Tabernacle), He is surrounded by the heavenly host.³ This conception is obviously framed on the model of the Babylonian Ziggurat as the seat of deity, with its crowning sanctuary, its *parak*, and its seven circling

¹ Addison, and so Shakspeare :

"There's not the smallest orb which thou beholdest,
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubim "

(*Merchant of Venice*, v. 1).

² Lenormant, *Beginnings of Hist.*, 536.

³ Fuller, *Apocrypha*, i. 175.

stages connected with the planets. Thus at Borsippa, E-Zida, the Ziggurat of Nebo, was known as "the house of the seven bonds (or spheres) of heaven and earth"—*i.e.* the stations of the seven planets, which were symbolised by the seven vari-coloured storeys of the tower.¹ The Babylonian god who, in "the supreme house of life," as the Holy of Holies of this Ziggurat was termed, presided as chief over the heavenly bodies, was addressed as "the overseer of the angel-hosts of heaven and earth."²

29. Origen brings the seven heavens of the Rabbins,³ and the "many mansions" which lead by gradations up to the highest heaven, into connection with "the spheres of those bodies which the Greeks call planets," and all three ideas as illustrating the vision of Bethel. Having referred to an opinion of Celsus, as agreeing with that of Plato (in his "Timæus"), that souls can make their way to and from the earth through the planets, he adds: "Moses, our most ancient prophet, says that a divine vision was presented to the view of our prophet Jacob—a ladder stretching to heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon it, and the Lord established

¹ The seven gods of the planets in the Babylonian system were invested with the government of the Universe. To these corresponded "the seven phantoms of flame," "the seven demons of the ignited spheres," and the seven angels of the Cabbalists (Lenormant, *Chald. Magic*, 26).

² Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, 115, 112.

³ Clem. Alex., *Strom.*, iv. 25; Edersheim, *Jesus the Messiah*, ii. 746.

upon its top ; obscurely pointing, by this matter of the ladder, either to the same truths which Plato had in view, or to something greater than these.”¹ In continuance, he proceeds to give a curious description of certain Persian mysteries used in the worship of Mithras, which exactly reproduces the design and pattern of the ancient Babylonian Ziggurat, and incidentally illustrates the meaning of Jacob’s ladder. In these mysteries, he says, “there is a representation of the two heavenly revolutions—of the movement, viz. of the fixed stars, and of that which takes place among the planets, and of the passage of the soul through these. The representation is of the following nature: There is a ladder (κλίμαξ) with lofty gates, and on the top of it an eighth gate. The first consists of lead, the second of tin, the third of copper, the fourth of iron, the fifth of mixed metal, the sixth of silver, and the seventh of gold. The first gate they assign to Saturn, indicating by the lead the slowness of this star; the second to Venus, comparing her to the splendour and softness of tin; the third to Jupiter, being made of copper and solid; the fourth to Mer-

¹ *Against Celsus*, vi. 21 (Ante-Nic. Lib., ii. 359). Proclus, in his commentary on the *Timæus* of Plato, says that the Babylonians call the starry spheres “herds” and also “angels.” “The stars which preside over each of these herds are considered demons similar to the angels and are called archangels, and they are seven in number.” Elsewhere he says, “Stars are divine animals and have intellect and a divine soul” (T. Taylor, trans. ii. 277). See also Rich, *Occult Sciences*, 301.

cury, of iron, which is patient of every kind of work . . . ; the fifth to Mars, composed of mixed metal . . . ; the sixth of silver, to the Moon; the seventh of gold, to the Sun—thus imitating the different colours of the two latter.”¹ These colours and their order agree closely with the planetary stages of the Ziggurat, as given by Lenormant (*Histoire Ancienne*, ii. 199). The same learned Orientalist holds that the planetary spirits of Zoroastrianism, the seven Amesha-spentas, were developed from the Igigi, or celestial archangels of the Babylonians, which had four wings and human faces.²

30. If to the early Semites struggling out of heathenism angels were not as yet fully differentiated from those other radiant ministers of God, the stars, it is not impossible that the attendant spirits, which seemed to the dreaming patriarch to traverse the circling terraces of the Holy Mount, were not essentially different from the planetary lights, that, like celestial beings, moved in mystic dance around the Central Pole, which was at once the centre of the visible creation and the peak of the world-mountain. The mountain-top, “visited all night by troops of stars,” might well seem angel-haunted. Indeed, that a star can discharge the angelic office is a thought not alien to the spirit of the Gospels (S. Matt. ii. 2); it was congenial also to the Roman mind. Plautus makes Arcturus speak the prologue to his play of “*Rudens*” as follows:

¹ *Against Celsus*, vi. 22.

² *Beginnings of Hist.*, 87.

" Qui gentes omnis mariaque et terras movet
 Eius sum civis civitate coelitem.
 Ita sum, ut videtes, splendens stella candida ;
 Signum, quod semper tempore exoritur suo,
 Hic atque in coelo. Nomen Arcturo est mihi.
 Noctu sum in coelo clarus atque inter deos ;
 Inter mortalis ambulo interdus.
 Et alia signa de coelo ad terram accidunt.
 Qui est imperator divom atque hominum, Iupiter,
 Is nos per gentes alium alia disparat,
 Qui facta hominum, mores, pietatem, et fidem
 Noscamus, ut quemque adjuvet opulentia.
 Qui falsas lites falsis testimoniis
 Petunt, quique in iure abiurant pecuniam,
 Eorum referimus nomina exscripta ad Iovem.
 Cotidie ille scit quis hic quaerat malum."

Which may be Englished thus :

" A citizen am I from heaven's height
 Of him who sways all nations, lands and seas.
 E'en as you see, a brilliant shining star,
 Which ever rises at its season due,
 Here and in heaven. Arcturus is my name.
 By night I shine in heaven among the gods
 And walk by day 'midst mortals upon earth.
 Other stars too from heaven to earth descend.
 Jove, who is Ruler both of gods and men,
 Sends us abroad among the peoples wide
 To watch the conduct, faith, and deeds of men,
 And help to minister in time of need.
 Those who by perjured oaths maintain their cause,
 And lawful debts in court refuse to pay,
 Their names we note and bear aloft to Jove.
 What evil each has earned here below
 Thus knows he day by day."

With this Roman idea, that the same beings are

alternately stars by night and recording angels by day, may be compared the Rabbinic belief that Maon, one of the seven heavens, contains the Angels of the Ministry who sing by night, but are silent by day for the purpose of serving Israel.¹

31. All spiritual conceptions, as we know, in their presentment are moulded upon a physical basis. It is not improbable, therefore, that stellar phenomena may have helped to shape the early Semite's ideas of celestial beings meditating between heaven and earth. Even in later times the Jewish mind conceived that some new angels were created every day out of the River of Light (Nahar de-Nur), by which, I presume, the Milky Way was meant, and into this they passed away again when they had sung God's praises.² The igneous nature of the Angelic Host is often intimated in Scripture; the Seraphim are "the fiery beings"; the Psalmist says that the Almighty "maketh flaming fire his ministers"³ as well as "the winds His messengers" (Ps. civ. 4). Indeed, among all branches of the human family elemental fire, as the main principle of star-worship, was regarded as a kind of angel-mediator between

¹ Edersheim, *Jesus the Messiah*, ii. 746. A reminiscence of the old belief seems to survive in the Revelation of S. John, where stars are the symbols of angels: "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches" (Rev. i. 20).

² Edersheim, ii. 755. Compare Dan. xii. 13.

³ Jennings and Lowe, *in loco*. Compare "Where light subsists alone, 'tis a spiritual substance, and may be an angel" (Sir T. Browne, *Works*, ii. 372, ed. Bohn).

man and God. In the Rig-Veda it is termed Angira, "the active one," the swift messenger, while the Angiras, or personifications of fire, were the sacred host of heaven, a troop of priestly demi-gods and heavenly singers. The Greek ἄγγελος (angel) corresponds so closely to this word in form, use, and meaning that many scholars have gone so far as to identify the two words,¹ but to this Prof. Max Müller² and others refuse their consent. But, in any case, the personal and spiritual beings which appeared from time to time in human form, as God's messengers to man in the Bible, would naturally be merged into, and identified with, the sidereal conceptions of an earlier period, if they were not, as some may think, by evolution derived from them. The folklore of many peoples continues to associate the stars with angels. It is wrong to point the finger at them, as it hurts the angels' eyes.³ "When I talk of eyes the stars come out. If they are angels' eyes, why do they look down here and see good men hurt, and only wink and sparkle all the night?"⁴ In the Vedas the Pitris, or souls of the happy dead, shine as stars to mortal eyes; and

¹ Grassmann, Weber, Böhtlingk, F. C. Cook, Herzog, &c. Cf. Pers. *angara*, Gk. ἄγγαρος, a courier or messenger; Ragozin, *Vedic India*, 165, 256, 261, 364.

One Jewish spirit is undoubtedly of Persian origin, Asmodeus (Tobit iii. 8) = Pers. Aeshma-daeva, "Lust-demon."

² *Contributions to Science of Mythology*, ii. 807.

³ Grimm, *Teut. Myth.*, p. 1790.

⁴ Dickens, *Barnaby Rudge*, ch. iii.

"Spirits to the stars, as Plato deem'd
Return."¹

"The fathers have adorned the sky with stars" (R. Veda, x. 68).² They are the lights of beatified men.³

32. The physical aspect of angelic beings is not so opposite to the orthodox view as might be thought. Cardinal Newman says: "It was, I suppose, to the Alexandrian School and to the early Church that I owe in particular what I definitely held about angels. I viewed them not only as the ministers employed by the Creator in the Jewish and Christian dispensations, as we find on the face of Scripture, but as carrying on, as Scripture also implies, the economy of the visible world. I considered them as the real causes of motion, *light*, and life, and of those elementary principles of the physical universe which, when offered in their developments to our senses, suggest to us the notion of cause and effect, and of what are called the laws of nature. Every breath of air, and ray of light and heat, every beautiful prospect is, as it were, the skirts of their garments, the waving of the robes of those whose faces see God." In beholding a ray of light, he says, one might "discover that he was in the presence of some powerful being who was hidden behind the invisible things he was inspecting."⁴

¹ Dante, *Paradiso*, iv. (Cary).

² Lang, *Myth, Rit. and Rel.*, i. 227.

³ Id., i. 137.

⁴ *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, p. 28 (ed. 1890).

There is much here to remind us of the Chinese doctrine of celestial spirits (*Shin*), as opposed to terrestrial spirits (*Ki*), among which we find the spirits of the sun and the moon and the stars, the clouds, wind, thunder, and rain.¹

This examination of the subjective impression formed by the early Semites about celestial intermediaries, and the phenomenal basis on which their rude conception was first built, does not impugn the objective reality of the Angels of Revelation, or their substantive existence as a distinct order of created beings. Indeed, they constitute so integral a part of the Scripture history from first to last, that it is not possible to reject them without rejecting it. Nevertheless, evolution and development seem to be traceable here, as in the progressive growth and unfolding of a much greater idea—that of Jahveh (Jehovah) Himself. Even our most spiritual poet could say :

“ There are, who gazing on the stars
Love-tokens read from worlds of light,
Not as dim-seen through prison-bars,
But as with *Angels'* welcome bright.”²

¹ M. Müller, *Science of Religion*, 208.

“ Could we but deem the stars had hearts and loved,
They would seem happier, holier, even than now ;
And, ah ! why not ? They are so beautiful ”

(Bailey, *Festus*).

² Keble, *Lyra Innocentium*, *Dedication*.

The Name "Bethel."

33. When Jacob lay down to rest he was, no doubt, under the influence of the *religio loci*, and in a state of expectant anticipation. Where the Deity had manifested Himself beforetime to one of his servants, He will most probably manifest Himself again to another. A theophany is to be expected there. "All that is necessary to constitute a Semitic sanctuary is a precedent, and when the precedent has been strengthened by repetition the holiness of the place is fully secured."¹ Jacob therefore concludes from his own vision at Bethel, not merely that Jehovah is present there at that moment, but that the place is His permanent abode, "the House of God and the Gate of Heaven." It is not that God came down at Bethel because Jacob was there, but rather that Jacob had providentially lighted on the spot where God was known to be accessible, and the steps of ascent to His presence were already consecrated and waiting to be revealed. It was here that Abraham, on first entering the land of Canaan, had set up an altar to Jahveh (Gen. xii. 8). And even then it had the reputation of being a "House of God;" for a still older name of the place was Beth-Ôn, "the House of Ôn." It was already dedicated to the worship of a Canaanitish deity, Ôn,

¹ W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, 108-109. So to Jacob on his return to Palestine the Divine revelation is renewed at Bethel (Gen. xxxv. 1-15).

apparently the Sun-god, who gave his name to the city of Ôn (or Aven) in Lower Egypt, which was otherwise called Heliopolis, or Beth-Shemesh (Jer. xliii. 13), Egyptian PER-RA, "House of the Sun."¹ A Phœnician gem shows a human figure of Egyptian type, with the word *Ani*, meaning apparently the Egyptian An or Ôn, the rising Sun (Conder, *Syrian Stone-Lore*, 81).² Beth-ôn or Bethaun (Joshua vii. 2, xviii. 12; Lxx. or Beth-âven) occurs in Joshua as close to, but apparently distinct from, Bethel. This Ôn, Egyptian An or Annu, seems to be the same as the Babylonian Anu, the god of the sky and lord of Heaven, the Supreme Deity corresponding to El,³ whose worship had found its way into Canaan before the time of Abraham in company with that of his consort Anat, who gave her name to Anathoth, Beth-Anath, and other places

¹ Wiedemann, *Religion of Anct. Egyptians*, 17; Erman, *Life in Anct. Egypt*, 27; Sayce, *Patriarchal Palestine*, 82, 191, 257. Budge, *Book of the Dead*, cxxxiii. Professor Sayce has conjectured that the old Canaanitish sanctuary at Beth-el may once have been known as "the house of Joseph," i.e. the Joseph referred to being a Canaanitish deity (=Assyr. *Asipu*, a diviner; Aram. *ashshâph*) (*Hib. Lect.*, 51). The Rabbins held that the evil eye had no power on the house of Joseph (Edersheim, *Jesus the Messiah*, ii. 772).

² Whether the Irish Ano, Anu, the Mother of the Gods, and Queen of Heaven, the Moon, who was worshipped on hills at midsummer and winter (O'Reilly, *Ir. Dict.*, 572; Elton, *Origins of Eng. Hist.*, 286), has any connection with these words, I do not venture to say.

³ M. Robiou, *Egyptian and Babylonian Triads*, 17.

in Palestine. Thus Beth-ôn, or Beth-Anu,¹ would be the exact counterpart of Beth-Anath, which in Joshua xix. 38, is paired with Beth-Shemesh (= Beth-ôn), and occurs in the Place-list of Thothmes III. as Beth-Anta (Bît-Anati) beside Beth-sa-el (Bît-sa-ili) = Bethel.² This consideration serves to throw light on many passages of Scripture, such as "the young men of Ôn" (or Aven, Ezek. xxx. 17); "the Valley of Ôn" (or Aven, Amos i. 5); "the high-places (*bâmôth*) of Ôn" (or Aven, Hos. x. 8); and Beth-aven (= Beth-ôn), with a play upon words used in the Hebrew sense of "house of vanity" or "nothingness," as a contemptuous name for Bethel, as being the seat of idolatry, in Hosea iv. 15; like "Bethel becomes 'Âven" (= vanity) in Amos v. 5.

If Anu, the Babylonian deity, once had a sanctuary at Bethel, it would serve to explain many ideas associated with the spot as a visional type of the Ziggurat. For, as we have already seen, Anu was sometimes regarded as the pole of the heavens, the divine centre of creation, "the support of all the luminaries and father of all the genii" (= angels). A

¹ Akkadian An, the Supreme God, heaven (Schrader, *Cuneiform Insc. and Old Test.*, ii. 210). Hence perhaps also Beth-any, explained as "House of Glory" in Jerome's *Onomasticon*. Ainat is still the Arab form of Anathoth (Joshua xxi. 18; Burton and Drake, *Unexplored Syria*, i. 74).

² See Maspero, *Vic. Inst. Trans.*, xxii. 93; Sayce, *Patriarchal Palestine*, 232; *Hib. Lect.*, 187. An was an Egyptian name of Osiris, as the Sun (*Records of the Past*, ii. 119). Close to Annu, Ôn, was a place called "Babylon of Egypt" (Budge, *Book of the Dead*, cxxxv.).

substratum of more ancient beliefs thus underlay the imagery of Jacob's dream. We shall see presently, too, that at the Egyptian On, as at Bethel, the presence of the Deity was associated by his worshippers with a monument of stone.¹

Moreover, we have reason to believe that, when the patriarch gave his resting-place at Beth-Ôn, the higher title of Beth-El, "the House of God," his thoughts were reverting to the nomenclature of his forefathers, who used the same phrase in a similar signification. Bit-ilu, "House of God," was the very term which the Babylonians applied to the temple of their deities. Beth-sha-el (*i.e.* Bit-sa-ili) is the form that Bethel takes in the Tel el-Amarna letters (about 1400 B.C.);² and, as Hommel has pointed out, Assur-bel-Kala (B.C. 1100) calls on "the god (of) Baïti-ilani (= Bêth-êl) to curse the countries of the West ("Ancient Hebrew Tradition," p. 196). There were even personal reasons, we may say, why this particular term should naturally occur to the mind of Jacob at this juncture. The grandfather to whose house he was making his lonely way bore this identical compound

¹ The ancient ideogram of An, the city of Heliopolis, was a conventionalised column of stone surmounted by a star, or emblem of the sun (Wiedemann, *Relig. of Anct. Egypt*, 154). Similarly huge monoliths have been found at Aksum, representing a building with many storeys, and the disc of the Sabæan Sun-god at top (J. T. Bent, *Sacred City of the Ethiopians*, 184). In Egyptian Annu is the eastern solar mount over which the sun rises (Renouf, *Soc. Bib. Arch. Proc.*, xviii. 8).

² Sayce, *Patriarchal Palestine*, 222, 232.

as his personal name—Bethuel, “the House of God.”¹ Bethel is indeed already found as a man’s appellation in the Tel el-Amarna tablets,² as it is still sometimes among ourselves.

34. This spot was to the dreamer not only “the House of God,” but “the Gate of Heaven.” For this expression he may have been indebted to the reminiscences of his other grandfather. When Abraham dwelt at Ur he may well have heard the famous hymn to the chief tutelary deity of that city, the Moon-god, “the lord of Ur,” which contained this line,

“Who from depth to height bright piercing openeth *the gate of heaven.*”³

In the Babylonian cosmography the sun and moon make their entrance and exit through great gates at their rising and setting. The 5th Creation tablet says that the Creator “opened great gates on either side,” and the Book of Enoch preserves the same idea.⁴ A Babylonian seal represents Il Shadde, Shaddai, the Sun-god, stepping over the mountain-top through the great open doors of heaven.⁵ Indeed

¹ It was, no doubt, originally a place-name (*e.g.* Joshua xix. 4; 1 Chron. iv. 30). Cf. Bethulia, Judith iv. 6.

² Sayce, *Expos. Times*, ix. 34.

³ Tomkins, *Studies on the Times of Abraham*, 10.

⁴ Boscawen, *Bible and the Monuments*, 49, 63.

⁵ Ball, *Variorum Aids*, plate 110. In Homer the palace of Zeus is on the highest peak of Olympus; below it lie the clouds which separate it from earth; these are the gates of heaven entrusted to the guardianship of the Hours, whose duty it is to roll back and close again the cloudy portal (*Il.* v. 749 *seq.*; H. F. Tozer, *Highlands of Turkey*, ii. 22).

Babylon (Babel) itself owes its name to the same conception, being the Assyrian Bab-ili, "Gate of God," and that a reproduction of the old Akkadian term, Ka-Dingirra, "the Gate of God";¹ another temple, E-Sagila, was known as Ka-Khilibu, "the Gate of Glory."² Such were the radiant portals that Jacob saw thrown back, when, as an apocryphal writer expresses it, "the Almighty, great in glory, the true God, displaying His holy countenance opened the heavenly gates, from which two glorified and awful angels descended manifest."³

35. Again, that Jahveh should reveal Himself and make a communication to His servant in a dream or vision of the night, quite harmonises with the religious ideas of the Babylonian stock from which the Abrahamitic family sprang. A penitential psalm to Mero-dach, pleading for forgiveness, prays for the blessing of an auspicious dream:

"Enlighten me and let me dream a favourable dream.
May the dream that I dream be favourable; may the dream that
I dream be established (fulfilled).
Turn the dream that I dream into a blessing.
May Makhir, the god of dreams, rest upon my head.
Yea, let me enter into Beth-Saggil [House of the Lofty Head],
the palace of the gods, the temple of the lord."⁴

¹ Sayce, *Higher Criticism and the Monuments*, 155; Budge, *Babylonian Life*, 18.

² Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, 94.

³ Lxx. 3 Maccabees vi. 18.

⁴ Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, 355; *Fresh Light*, 185. A chapel dedicated to this Assyrian Morpheus, Makhir, has been discovered, and its bronze-plated gates are now in the British Museum (Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, 65).

In another hymn, addressed to Sin, the Moon-god, in his temple at Hârân, Nabonius says :

“ They sent me a dream (*sutti*, ‘ product of the night ’),
Merodach, the Great Lord, and Sin, the illuminators of the
heavens and earth,
The strengthener of all—Merodach communed with me.”¹

But dreams, it has been truly said, “ are moulded by our experience even when they transcend it.” In a dream revelation joins on to existing conceptions and is partly determined by the mental training and precognitions of the recipient. The ethnological as well as the personal element enters into it as a formative element.² To one in the early Semite stage of civilisation access to God would naturally assume the aspect of an ascent of the sacred temple-mound or zigurat. Eyes, which ere they closed,

“ Saw the Syrian sun-set’s meteor-crown
Hang over Bethel for a little space,”³

would behold in visions the golden resplendency of the hill-top shrine, which shone forth to the weary traveller like a beacon burning between heaven and earth.⁴ “ The mighty blocks of square rock that lay piled like cromlechs on the path were changed in the wild fancy of sleep into a staircase that seemed to rest on the edge of heaven. The stars which, as he walked, had stolen out upon the night, were impersonated by his imagination, trained in the oriental

¹ Boscawen, *Vic. Inst. Trans.*, xx. 125.

² Orelli, *Old Test. Prophecy*, 9. ³ Archbishop Alexander.

⁴ Maspero, *Anct. Egypt and Assyria*, 214.

thought that linked to each of those bright worlds a spiritual lord, and seemed to ascend and descend the staircase as they rose and set within the dream. So far the vision may have taken form from the last sights he saw with half-closed eyes. But now something more was added. God penetrated the vision with a revelation of Himself, and Jacob seemed to see a Form which crowned the staircase, and to hear a voice that entered into covenant with him.”¹ He fell asleep with these two thoughts in his mind—his present landlessness and poverty, the future magnificence of the promise, when his seed should be as the stars of heaven. And the response to those ideas which came in sleep is described as conveyed by the audible voice of God. Still, “if in a dream a particular course of action is suggested, the Arab believes that God has *spoken* and directed him. The Arab scribe or historian would describe the event as the ‘voice of the Lord’ having spoken unto the person; or that God appeared to him in a dream and ‘said.’”² And the promise which the Angel of Jahveh, the Mediator,³ conveyed thus to Jacob was that the very land on which he then was lying as a homeless exile should yet belong to him, and to his seed after him, which shall spread abroad into all lands, bringing a blessing with them for all time. “No man who was ignorant of God, none but a man who believed in

¹ Stopford Brooke, *Sermons*, 2nd ser. 235.

² Sir S. Baker, *Nile Tributaries*, 131.

³ See Gen. xxxi. 11 and 12, xlviii. 16.

God and longed for communion with Him, could have had such a dream as this. And hence we may take Jacob's dream as a culminating proof of that susceptibility to spiritual influences, desires and hopes of which we find several indications in his recorded history."¹ Or, as Sir Thomas Browne says, "Virtuous thoughts of the day lay up good treasures for the night; whereby the impressions of imaginary forms arise into sober similitudes, acceptable unto our slumbering selves and preparatory unto divine impressions. Thus prepared, Jacob might well dream of angels upon a pillow of stone."²

¹ S. Cox, *The Hebrew Twins*, 46.

² *Works*, iii. 343 (ed. 1852). For the New Testament reference to the subject (S. John, iii. 51), see the Appendix.

PART II

THE STONE

The Stone at Bethel

36. JACOB arose in the morning, deeply impressed by the dream which had visited him. The bright vision, indeed, had faded away into the light of common day, but its effect remained. That barren patch on which he had couched so hardly he recognised as hallowed ground—the stepping-off place into the world of spirit which had there come down to earth—the portal of the heavenly ascent. “Awaked out of his sleep he said, ‘Surely Jahveh (Jehovah) is in this place, and I knew it not!’ And he was afraid, and said, ‘How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the House of God, and this is the Gate of Heaven!’” (vv. 16, 17).

In particular he regarded with reverential awe the stone on which his head had rested when the radiant spirit-world had opened above his slumbers. “Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar

(*matztzēbah*), and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place 'Bêth-Êl' ('House of God')" (vv. 18, 19). "And this stone which I have set up for a pillar shall be 'God's House'" (Bêth-Êl) (v. 22). He evidently considered that this stone was the ministerial medium of the Divine revelation. It stood in some mysterious way in direct connection with that Presence which had manifested itself to him so wonderfully.¹ Nay, that Presence was somehow realised and localised in that stone. That Great Spirit, whose all-pervading energy is immanent in tree and river and hill, had now concentrated itself more potently and apparently in this rude boulder, so that it had become a habitation of the Deity, a Bêth-Êl, or House of God. As the visible embodiment of His activity, it deserves religious veneration. Accordingly Jacob proceeds immediately to perform certain rites and ceremonies, which have this stone for their object. He took of the little store of oil which he had provided himself with for his journey, and poured the precious unguent as a consecrating libation over the sacred symbol. The significance of this primeval rite will occupy us hereafter. For the present we

¹ We may perhaps compare the stone at Thoricus in Attica, which was regarded as standing on the brink of another world (Wordsworth, *Athens and Attica*, 215). The "Thorician Stone," hard by the Brazen Threshold which led down to Hades (*Æd. Col.* 1595, see Jebb), seems to have been the stepping-off place to a higher world, it having been from thence that Cephalos was caught up to the gods (*Eur. Hipp.*, 455). Here it was that *Ædipus* "passed," or was translated, into Hades.

confine ourselves to the circumstance that the patriarch seems quite naturally to have associated the appearance of Jahveh with the stony pillow on which his head had rested during the theophany, and to have inferred at once that it was his simple duty to honour it as the abode of Deity.

The Theory of Stone-Worship.

37. A religious veneration of stones is something so remote from our way of thinking at present, that it requires some mental strain and effort to place oneself at the primeval point of view. To the modern mind, a stone or boulder is the very ideal of absolute deadness and brute insensateness. For ourselves, as for the Norseman, it is the natural intensive to express utter negation of life and feeling, as in "stone-deaf," "stone-dead," "stone-cold" (Icel. *stein-odhr*, stone-mad, *stein-blindr*, stone-blind).¹ But it must be remembered that the sharp distinction which we draw between animate and inanimate is a refinement not so patent to children, or to men in a childlike state of culture. To their vivid imagination a stone, like every other object, is endowed with a real and animate existence. It may be instinct with a hidden life of its own, or may be the abode of some indwelling spirit. The idea of long duration and unchanging continuance passes into that of immortal existence and actual being. A Runic stone, for instance, proclaims its belief

¹ F. Metcalf, *The Englishman and the Scandinavian*, 447.

that the glory of the buried hero, “E mun stanta, Meth sten lifir”—“Aye must stand while the *stone liveth*.”¹ And another similar inscription (if Professor Stephens is correct in its restoration) expresses the same wish: “While stone hath life.”² In Northern India the natives will not move a certain fetish-stone on the sacred hill near Mathura, because it is supposed to be endowed with life.³ Nothing offers a more stubborn resistance to one who interferes with it than a stone.

The Latin word for it, *calx*, is supposed by some etymologists to have meant originally that which kicks back (as the heel, *calx*, does) when it is struck; which, if correct, would lend force to Dr. Johnson’s practical refutation of the non-existence of matter (*solvitur calcando*). When once set moving it injures or kills any living thing that comes across its path. Among the Indians of Guiana, rocks and stones are supposed to possess life and spirits like those of human beings; indeed, everything created, whether animate or inanimate, has its own indwelling spirit. This was held especially in the case of any rock which was in any way abnormal or remarkable.⁴ One Indian placed his chief confidence in a certain rock, which he believed to move and advance. Generally, as Mr. Hartland has observed, in the remote times of

¹ G. Stephens, *The Runic Hall*, 14.

² *Ibid.*

³ Crooke, *Folklore of Northern India*, ii. 180.

⁴ Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, 352-55; Lang, *Myth, Ritual and Religion*, i. 53, 54; Hartland, *Science of Fairy Tales*, 230-32.

the higher heathendom, men, one way or another, arrived at the conclusion that certain spots, and preferably certain striking objects, were the embodiment of powerful spirits or the abiding-places of the gods.¹

38. Professor Robertson Smith states his theory as follows :

“When all nature is mysterious and full of unknown activities, any natural object or occurrence which appeals strongly to the imagination, or excites sentiments of awe and reverence, is readily taken for a manifestation of divine or demoniac life.”² Accordingly, “natural rocks and boulders, suited by their size and aspect to affect the savage imagination, have acquired in various parts of the world the reputation of being animated objects, with power to help and hurt man, and so have come to receive religious worship. . . . The savage believes that the god comes into the stone, dwells in it or animates it, so that for practical purposes the stone is thenceforth an embodiment of the god, and may be spoken of and dealt with as if it were the god himself.”³ “The rule of Semitic worship is that the artificial (stone) symbol can only be set up in a place already consecrated by tokens of the divine presence ; but the sacred stone is not merely a token that its place is frequented by a god ; it is also a permanent pledge that in this place he consents to enter into stated relations with men

¹ *Op. cit.*, 232.

² W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, 112.

³ *Id.*, 189.

and accept their service.”¹ “The god inhabits the true or sacred stone, not in the sense in which a man inhabits a house, but in the sense in which his soul inhabits his body; and this unseen life which inhabits it makes the sacred object itself be conceived as a living being.”² The Canaanites and the early Hebrews certainly treated the *massēba* as a sort of embodiment of the divine presence. “Jacob’s pillar is more than a mere landmark, for it is anointed, just as idols were in antiquity, and the pillar itself, not the spot on which it stood, is called ‘the House of God,’ as if the Deity were conceived actually to dwell in the stone, or manifest Himself therein to his worshippers. And this is the conception which appears to have been associated with sacred stones everywhere.”³

39. In Melanesia it is hard to decide whether some worshipped stone is the dwelling of a dead man’s soul or the outward organ of a spirit.⁴ In China, also, stones have the reputation of being inhabited by spirits. At Canton, formerly, five almost shapeless blocks of granite were looked upon with superstitious reverence from time immemorial.⁵ Even in some parts of Central Europe stones continue still to be regarded as the habitations of some genius or supernatural power.⁶ In India, according to Mr. Crooke, the virtue of all fetich-stones rests in their

¹ W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, 190. Similarly the divine life is immanent in a tree. Deut. xxxiii. 16 says that Jahveh “dwells in (not visits) the bush” (Id., 177). ² Id., 85.

³ Id., 188. ⁴ Lang, i. 153. ⁵ Denys, *Folklore of China*, 96.

⁶ G. de Rialle, *Mythologie Comparée*, 29.

embodying the spirits of gods or deified men.¹ Nandâ Devî, the mountain goddess of the Himâlaya, for instance, is worshipped in the form of two great stones.² The magic or spiritual force of animals sometimes survives in the stones into which they have been transformed (Zuni Indians). The Canton boulders mentioned above were originally five rams, just as the blocks of stone near Abury are called by the shepherds the Grey Wethers.³

Indeed, any stone which attracts attention, from its curious shape or unusual appearance, is believed to possess some mysterious influence, or to be inhabited by some latent spirit, which causes it to deviate from the ordinary type. Its peculiarity betrays the presence of some supernatural being which is the cause of it.⁴

“ Among these rocks and stones, methinks I see
More than the heedless impress that belongs
To lonely nature’s casual work ; they bear
A semblance strange of power intelligent,
And of design not wholly worn away.”⁵

In Ireland and elsewhere, an earth-fast stone is often regarded with superstitious feelings as the habitat of the fairy folk or nature spirits. Low-caste Hindus have a belief that stones often incarnate the souls of the dead ;⁶ and in the Deccan natives adore

¹ *Pop. Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, ii. 183.

² *Id.*, 180.

³ C. Knight, *Old England*, i. 10.

⁴ Crooke, ii. 159.

⁵ Wordsworth, *The Excursion*.

⁶ G. de Rialle, *Mythologie Comparée*, 21.

a great stone which they call Bhuma Devam, "God of the Earth."¹ That simple awe of the unusual which is common to all religions leads the Hindu to worship any stone that catches his attention as being out of the common way. Any jutting bit of rock, or huge boulder lying alone in the plain, or oddly-shaped stone becomes a fetich embodying divinity. He pays reverent attention to the Unaccountable Thing, the startling expression of an unknown power; and this rude adoration becomes modified, by-and-by, by passing into the higher order of imaginative superstition. "First, the stone is the abode of some spirit; its curious shape or situation betraying *possession*. Next, this strange form or aspect argues some *design*, or handiwork, of supernatural beings, or is the vestige of their presence on earth; and one step further lands us in the world-wide regions of mythology." Sir Alfred Lyall, whom I am here quoting, says that he knew "a Hindu officer of great shrewdness and very fair education, who devoted several hours daily to the elaborate worship of five round pebbles, which he had appointed to be his symbol of Omnipotence. Although his general belief was in one all-pervading Divinity, he must have something symbolic to handle and address."²

Brahmanism draws no line of separation between

¹ G. de Rialle, *Mythologie Comparée*, 20. Most children believe at times that stones are animated, like Miss Ingelow ("An Infancy," *Longman's Mag.*, Feb. 1890).

² Sir A. Lyall, *Asiatic Studies*, 2nd ed. 9, 10.

stones, plants, animals, men and gods; they are all liable to pass into each other.¹ Even stones may represent for it the divine presence, and become media through which the One Spirit may become an object of adoration.² Rough stones or rocks, supposed to have descended direct from heaven, are of their own nature pervaded by the essence of the deity. "They are the most sacred of all objects of adoration, and, when discovered, temples are built on them."³ At Orissa, for example, Siva is worshipped under the form of a large uncarved block of granite about eight feet long, partly buried in the ground, partly apparent above the soil, and honoured with an elaborate ceremonial.⁴ Similarly, in some Indian villages, the Mātā, or Mother-god, is represented by a simple rude stone lying recumbent,⁵ as also is the goddess Shashthi, who protects infants.⁶ A number of rough stones disposed in a circle, and smeared with red paint (as a substitute for blood), are set up in the fields to guard the crops.⁷ "All over India particular rocks are treated as divine. They are not only pervaded by the divine soul of the Universe which permeates all nature, but God is specially present in them."⁸

The god Krishna abides in the Sālā-grāma stone, even without consecration.⁹

This black stone is held in high veneration by

¹ M. Williams, *Brahmanism and Hinduism*, 44.

² Id., 50.

³ Id., 69.

⁴ Id., 93.

⁵ Id., 226.

⁶ Id., 229.

⁷ Id., 272.

⁸ Id., 350.

⁹ Id., 335.

other Hindu sects, as representing Vishnu, who has abode within it; while a white agate symbolises Siva, and a red stone Ganesa. The divine glory of these stones is celebrated in the Padma-purāṇa.¹

40. It has been well said that "the conception of an ubiquitous unconditioned spirit is entirely foreign to primitive thought. All the gods of antiquity were subject to physical limitations. There was always some holy place or sanctuary, some grove, tree, stone, or fountain, or, later on, some temple or image, wherein the god was assumed to dwell, and through which he had to be approached."²

To the Pantheist—and the animism of early religions, or belief that every object has its own spirit, readily merges into Pantheism—the immanence of the deity in all his works makes the cult of stones as reasonable as any other. As Giordano Bruno expressed it, "A spirit exists in all things, and no body is so small but that it contains a part of the divine substance in itself, by which it is animated."³

" The Earth, the Air, the Main,
With every diff'rent being they contain,
Are one prodigious aggregated God,
Of whom each Sand is part, each Stone and Clod." ⁴

¹ See M. Williams, *Hinduism*, 171, and Langlois, *Harivansa*, i. 199.

² Mrs. J. H. Philpot, *The Sacred Tree*, p. 25.

³ Thus Tatian, the converted Assyrian (middle of the second century), says: "How can I speak of stocks and stones as gods? For the spirit that pervades matter is inferior to the more Divine Spirit" (*Address to the Greeks*, ch. iv.).

⁴ R. Blackmore, *Creation* (1712), iii. 744; see J. R. Reynolds,

The mechanical mass of each is held together and interpenetrated by many known and unknown forces :

“ Lo, God is here—immediately here
Asserts Himself in every drop of blood ;
Here as the sap in the rose’s root He moves.
Here in the warmth-and-life-diffusing fire,
The life-power and the healing-power of all.”¹

A similar conception seems to underlie the obscure saying (No. V.) attributed to Jesus in the Oxyrhynchus fragment, “ Raise the stone and there thou shalt find Me ; cleave the wood and I am there.” The words assert the all-prevailing presence of Christ in nature ; that He who is the Life of all is immanent even in the stone and in the wood.² They may stand in some intentional relation (as a writer in the *Guardian* has pointed out) to Habakkuk’s rebuke of the idolater (ii. 19), “ that saith to the wood, ‘ Awake ’ ; to the dumb stone, ‘ Arise ! ’ Shall this teach ? There is no breath at all in the midst of it.” But, as the sage has said :

Mystery of the Universe, 179. The higher spiritual view will be found in J. R. Illingworth, *Divine Immanence, An Essay on the Spiritual Significance of Matter*, 1898.

¹ Leopold Schefer.

² Compare Lamartine of an ancient oak,—

“ Le ver trouve Ton nom gravé sous son écorce,
Et mon œil, dans sa masse et son éternité ”

(*Harmonies*, 137, ed. 1863).

In Babylonian belief the name of Ea, the God of Wisdom, was inscribed on the heart of the cedar-tree (Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, 242, 470).

“ To every form of being is assigned
 An *active* principle, howe’er removed
 From sense and observation, it subsists
 In all things, in all natures, in the stars
 Of azure heaven, the unenduring clouds,
 In flower and tree, in every pebbly stone
 That paves the brooks, the stationary rocks,
 The moving waters, and the invisible air.”¹

The Finns, as Castrén notes, look upon stones as living and personal things, and give them worship; small stones, as being small deities, they like to carry about with them in their pockets.² Even in the last century the Norwegians used to venerate certain round stones as bringing luck to the house and capable of speech, and honoured them by smearing them with butter.³ The Society Island natives adored pieces of basalt anointed with oil as divinely powerful by virtue of the atua, or deity, which filled them.⁴ The Lapps still believe that the rude stones which serve as idols are alive and can walk; a belief shared by the country people of France, who think that certain stones at times go to the river and return.⁵

A grand column of granite stands in the middle of the Piazza di Santa Trinità at Florence, erected by Cosmo I. in 1564. The great stone at its base was a kind of palladium of the city,

¹ Wordsworth, *The Excursion*, ix. 1-9.

■ M. Müller, *Contributions to Mythology*, 277, 278.

³ Nillson, *Prim. Inhabitants of Scandinavia*, 241; Tylor, *Prim. Culture*, ii. 167.

■ Tylor, ii. 162.

⁵ De Rougemont, *Le Peuple Primitif*, i. 515.

“ A god unformed, who sleeps within a stone,
Which sculptor's hand as yet has never known,
Brought in past ages from some unknown shore ;
Our fathers worshipped it—we know no more.”¹

Mr. Grant Allen's fantastic theory,² that the first sacred stones were sepulchral monuments or grave-stones, which acquired a sanctity from being associated with the spirits of the dead whose bones they covered, remains with himself, and has gained few adherents.

Universality of Stone-Worship.

41. The wide diffusion of stone-worship, which seems to be found in all quarters of the world, literally from China to Peru, shows that it is a phase of man's religious development, through which it almost invariably passes on its way to higher forms of belief. There is no race of mankind, apparently, that has not in primitive times taken some rude, unshapen stone to be the symbol or embodiment of the higher power which they feared or honoured, and have addressed to it their worship.³ “ This stands for God, but we know not his shape,” say the Kafirs of India. A rough stone is still the usual form under which the village goddess of Southern India

¹ C. G. Leland, *Legends of Florence*, 121.

² *The Idea of God*, *passim*.

³ G. de Rialle, *Myth. Comp.*, 12-31 ; Lubbock, *Orig. of Civil.*, 308-16 ; Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 19, 22, 27.

is adored, and that under which the deity Bhîmsen of Northern India is worshipped by the Gonds,¹ as Dâno is by the Bengalese,² and Mahasoba by the people of Western India.³

This unshapen monolith is, in many cases, a convenient symbol of the altar- or table-stone on which the blood of sacrifice has been poured, and where, consequently, the god has eaten and made covenant with his clansmen or worshippers. There he localises himself for their behoof. This has been brought out with abundant evidence by Professor Jevons,⁴ who remarks that when the blood was dashed or sprinkled on the stone—whether it was a table-altar, or a cairn, or a rude pillar or a baetylion, or beth-el, or massēba (Hos. iii. 4)—the god was believed to enter the stone and manifest his presence in it.⁵ So much so that the Quichés held that the stone after the blood-sprinkling was capable of speaking, or, according to the Scandinavians, had the power of prophecy.⁶ With the same idea the Samoyedes adore stones

¹ Crooke, *Pop. Religion of Northern India*, i. 90.

² *Id.*, 255; *cf.* ii. 99.

³ *Id.*, ii. 237; *cf.* i. 108; E. Higgins, *Heb. Idolatry and Superstitions*, 23.

⁴ *Introduction to History of Religion*, 130 *seq.*

⁵ *Id.*, 133. No one acquainted with the marvellous tenacity of survivals will be surprised to find in the *Liber Festivalis* that in Christian churches "the altar-stone betokeneth Christ's body" (H. J. Feasey, *Anct. Eng. Holy Week Ceremonial*, 106). It was commonly marked with five crosses to betoken the wounds. *Cf.* also Hartland, *Legend of Persius*, ii. 236.

⁶ Jevons, 133, 134.

which have been anointed with the blood of victims.¹ The same life has been shared by the stone, the god-representative, and the worshipper. Hence the sacred stones in India and elsewhere are commonly smeared with vermilion or other red pigment as a substitute for blood.² The Khoi-Khoi, or Hottentots, used formerly to worship great stones erected on the side of the paths and daubed with red earth, and to perform certain rites beside cairns of stones.³ That similar customs existed among the most ancient Greeks is evident from what Pausanias records. Having noted the fact that the people of Pharæ revere thirty square stones, giving to each stone the name of a god, he adds: "In the olden time all the Greeks worshipped unwrought stones instead of images."⁴ At Delphi he says there was "a stone on which they pour oil every day, and at every festival they put unspun wool on it" [to keep it warm].⁵ Near Gythium was "an unwrought stone on which Orestes sat and was relieved of his madness; it therefore was named Zeus Cappotas ("Reliever") in

¹ G. de Rialle, *Myth. Comp.*, 20.

² Crooke, *Pop. Rel. of N. India*, ii. 166; i. 90.

³ A. Lang, *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, ii. 18, 19.

⁴ *Description of Greece*, bk. vii., xxii. 4 (ed. J. G. Frazer, vol. i. p. 361). The rudest emblem of the Bonus Deus was a round stone, and a pyramidal black stone is worshipped by the Hindus at Jagannath (R. Burton, *Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah*, ii. 301).

⁵ Pausanias, bk. x., xxiv. 6 (ed. Frazer, i. 536).

the Doric tongue."¹ Zeus Kasios in Seleucia was the personification of a meteorite.²

So the Latins used to swear by Jupiter the Stone ("Jovem lapidem jurare"—Cicero), and Festus mentions that formerly in taking an oath they used to hold a flint stone, and while so doing call Jupiter (Diespiter) to witness that they would not willingly break their word. Similarly the stone which did duty for the god Terminus had a deityship of its own :

"Termine, sive *lapis*, sive es defossus in agro
Stipes, ab antiquis *tu quoque numen habes*." ³

The Aenianes of Thessaly had a sacred stone to which they performed worship and sacrifice, covering it with the fat of the victim.⁴ So the Wárális of Bombay venerate a shapeless stone, which is smeared with red lead and clarified butter, and pour oil on it to propitiate it; and the Key Islanders (E. Indies), to secure success in their undertakings, anoint with oil a black stone which is kept at the head of the sleeping-place;⁵ just as the Highlanders once used to make libations of milk on their Gruagach stones,⁶

¹ *Pausanias*, bk. iii., xxii. 1 (ed. Frazer, i. 169).

² G. de Rialle, *Myth. Comp.*, 23, 24. The aerolite which fell at Ægospotami was held in much veneration by the people of the Chersonesus (Plutarch); see *Quarterly Rev.*, "Meteors," Jan. 1853. Other instances of the deification of meteorites, as gifts direct from Heaven, are given by De Rougemont (*Le Peuple Primitif*, i. 514 seq.).

³ Ovid, *Fasti*, ii. 642.

⁴ Plutarch, *Quest. Græc.*, 13 (Frazer, *Pausanias*, iv. 154).

⁵ Frazer v. 354.

⁶ *Id.*, iv. 155.

—i.e. “enchanter’s (or giant’s) stones,” a name which is also given to others in Skye.¹

Sir W. Scott² quotes a passage from Martin’s “Description of the Western Isles” (p. 110), in which the Hebrideans are said to have received oracular responses from a large black stone by the seashore as the dictates of its tutelary deity. *Clocha labartha*, “the Speaking Stones,” is the popular name given by the Irish to two remarkable stone flags standing in a field near Oldcastle. Pagan rites of divination were evidently once practised at these stones, and till comparatively recently they used to be consulted by the peasantry in cases where their cattle had been lost or stolen or injured by the “evil eye.”³ Pilgrims are said to still visit the Bullan stones, co. Cork, for purposes of devotion and the cure of their ailments.⁴ In the Northern mythology the dwergs or dwarfs are said to have their dwelling in stones, and elves and drolls are believed to haunt Rocking-stones.⁵ Jötuns, or giants, have frequently been turned into stones, one by St. Olaf with the words :

“Stand thou there in stock and stone
Till I come hither back again.”⁶

¹ J. Bonwick, *Irish Druids and Old Irish Religions*, 197; cf. Kennedy, *Legendary Fictions of the Irish Celts*, 123; and illustrations in C. Knight, *Old England*, i. 10-19.

² *Lady of the Lake*, Note 2 T.

³ E. A. Conwell, *Tomb of Ollamh Fodhla*, 1-3.

⁴ Bonwick, *Irish Druids and Old Irish Religions*, 81.

⁵ Thorpe, *Northern Mythology*, i. 9; ii. 54. ⁶ *Id.*, ii. 42.

42. The primitive naturalism which found objects of worship in stones was characteristic of the Celts, as of other races. "The stone," says M. Renan, "seems the natural symbol of the Celtic races. It is an immutable witness that has no death. The animal, the plant, above all the human figure, only express the divine life under a determinate form; the stone, on the contrary, adapted to receive all forms, has been the fetich of peoples in their childhood. . . . The *men-hir* to be met with over the whole surface of the ancient world, what is it but the monument of primitive humanity, a living witness of its faith in Heaven?"¹ It is certainly significant that the ancient Celtic word *art* had the threefold meaning of "noble," "god," and "stone,"² and from very early times was given as an honourable name to kings, as Art in Ireland, Arthur in Britain.³ The Pagan Irish before St. Patrick's coming are said to have worshipped as a deity a stone-idol which was named *Crom-cruaith*, apparently meaning the "Creator Stone."⁴ This stone was capped with gold and encircled with twelve other rough stones. Crom-duff, "the Black Crom," was another idol-stone abolished by St. Patrick, and Crom-cruach, "the red idol," is mentioned in the "Dinn-Senchus" and Jocelyn's "Life of St. Patrick."⁵

¹ *Poetry of the Celtic Race, &c.*, 23.

² Cormac's *Glossary*; W. Stokes, *Three Irish Glosses*, xix.; O'Reilly, *Irish Dict.*, ed. O'Donovan, 576.

³ Joyce, *Irish Place-names*, ii. 150. ⁴ *Old Irish Folklore*, 195.

⁵ C. Elton, *Origins of Eng. History*, 282.

Dallans or stone-pillars also received reverence, and one of these seems to have been the famous Lia Fáil, or "Stone of Destiny," which was fabled to have been brought from the other world, and to have screamed aloud when the feet of Conn of the Hundred Battles rested upon it at Tara. It was brought to Scone in Scotland by the Irish invaders in the fifth century, whence Edward I. carried it off to London; and it now, as every one knows, forms the seat of the ancient coronation-chair in Westminster Abbey.¹ Fáil or Fal, to whom this stone was dedicated, is understood to be the Sun-god.² The ancient Irish monarchs used to be crowned upon it; a flat stone sacred to this purpose was called Leac-na-Righ, "the Stone of the Kings," and was regarded as a kind of palladium of the State.³ The monkish tradition insists that this coronation-stone was the identical one which served as Jacob's pillow at Bethel; and, further, that on its way to Scone it was conveyed to Iona, where St. Columba used it for the same purpose, and with the result that he too had a nightly visitation of angels.⁴

This superstitious veneration of stones is hardly yet extinct in Ireland. Mr. Gomme quotes an account of the inhabitants of the island of Inniskea,

¹ *Voyage of Bran*, ed. K. Meyer, 187; J. H. Burton, *Hist. of Scotland*, ii. 172; Kennedy, *Legendary Fictions of Irish Celts*, 267.

² J. Rhys, *Celtic Heathendom*, 206 seq.

³ E. W. Conwell, *Tomb of Ollamh Fodhla*, 26.

⁴ C. Knight, *Old England*, i. 19; Bonwick, *Irish Druids*, 57, 313-19; Camden, *Britain* (1637), *Scotia*, 42.

so lately as 1851, preserving a stone carefully wrapped up in flannel, just as the Delphians above wrapped theirs in wool; this they brought out at certain periods for adoration. "They pray to it in time of sickness, invoke it when a storm is desired to dash some helpless ship upon their coast, and again solicit the exercise of its power in calming the angry waves to admit of their fishing or visiting the mainland."¹ According to another account, this stone, which was called "Neevoge," the little saint [? Ir. *Neamhóg*, the little sacred thing], had been on the island from time immemorial, and was almost, if not altogether, worshipped by the people, who say that many miracles are performed by it.² Similarly Clogher in Tyrone is stated to have its name from a certain stone (*clochar*, *cloth*), "from which, in the times of Paganism, the devil used to pronounce juggling answers, like the oracles of Apollo Pythius, as is said in the Register of Clogher."³ Several instances of stones being venerated as emblems of the Deity by the Scotch are given by Forbes-Leslie, "Early Races of Scotland and their Monuments," pp. 249 *seq.* and 320.

43. In Cornwall the inhabitants from the earliest times have had the idea that stones—especially poised and perforated rocks—were connected with the mysteries of existence, and to this day they

¹ Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 168-9.

² *The Catholic Layman*, 1856, vol. v. p. 34.

³ O'Flaherty, *Ogygia*; Joyce, *Irish Place-names*, i. 400.

maintain this sacred character. The Logan stones, Ambrose stones, and the Cock-crow stones, which are sensitive enough to move at the cry of the bird of day, are instances in point.¹

Wordsworth refers to the judicial powers with which Rocking-stones were supposed to be invested :

“What though the accused, upon his own appeal
To righteous gods, when Man has ceased to feel,
Or at a doubting Judge’s stern command,
Before the STONE OF POWER no longer stand—
To take his sentence from the balanced Block,
As, at his touch, it rocks, or seems to rock ; . . .
Yet, for the Initiate, rocks and whispering trees
Do still perform mysterious offices.”²

It was customary formerly to have within or outside the church a broad flag, called the “marriage-stone,” upon which the bride was to stand if she desired her wedded life to be happy and fruitful. Instances are cited from Upsal, Lindisfarne, and Llantevit Major.³ As stones are of potent efficacy in producing the fertilising rain, both in North India⁴ and in the Scottish islands,⁵ they are believed to be powerful also in rendering the human species

¹ R. Hunt, *Romances and Drolls of West England*, i. 185-205, 318.

² *Humanity* (1829). The remains of superstitious rites performed at Garrack Zans or Holy Rocks may still be traced in Cornwall (Hunt, i. 231).

³ Trumbull, *Threshold Covenant*, 140-42.

⁴ Crooke, *Pop. Rel. of N. India*, i. 75.

⁵ Gomme, *Ethnology of Folklore*, 165-68.

prolific. This same belief exists also in Central Europe.¹

“The seven stones” of Hallamshire with their cup hollows ; the standing menhir at Stone, Somerset, into the hollow of which wine is poured when the Hundred Court is opened ; the Rollrich stones of Oxfordshire ; and the megalithic circles of Stonehenge and Stennis (Orkney) are further relics of this world-wide litholatry.²

44. The Pagan population of Europe clung with such remarkable tenacity to the veneration of rude stone monuments that Christianity had to wage a continuous warfare against it down to the thirteenth century or later.³ An old Norse church-balk (thirteenth century) ordains that “None shall to idols sacrifice, and none shall on groves or *stones* believe” (“*stenæ troæ*”).⁴ A Council at Rouen, about the end of the seventh century, forbids any one to offer candles or other offerings and vows at certain stones, as if some deity was there which could cause good or evil.”⁵ In the same century, Archbishop Theodore had to denounce the practice of stone-worship in England, and various church councils from time to time found it necessary to interdict it.⁶ So late as

¹ G. de Rialle, *Myth. Comp.*, 29.

² See also B. C. A. Windle, *Life in Early Britain*, 56 seq.

³ J. Fergusson, *Rude Stone Monuments*, 24, 26.

⁴ G. Stephens, *Thor the Thunderer*, 6.

⁵ Baluz in Fergusson, 25 ; who also refers to Keysler, *Antiquitates Septentrion.*, 18 (1720).

⁶ Jevons, *Hist. of Religion*, 142.

1656 the Presbytery of Dingwall, Ross, forbade, among other heathenish customs, the adoring of stones and wells.”¹

Extending our view to savage races, we find, as we should expect, that this primitive form of religion is everywhere rife. They credit any rock or stone that happens to impress their imagination with possessing life or supernatural powers, and adore them as representing the higher powers. In the New Hebrides stones are regarded as the embodiment of certain gods, and wherever the stone is the god is supposed to be.² The Dakotas, Omahas, and other Indian tribes when they meet a large boulder on the prairie present bundles of tobacco to it as a representative of an earth-god, and addressing it as “grandfather,” the name which they give to supernatural beings in prayer, ask for success.³ The Fijians and the Turanians of N. Asia agree in venerating stones as having mighty spirits dwelling in them. The natives of Polynesia and Malaysia regard stones and rocks as the tutelary guardians of their crops or as household penates.⁴

Stone-worship prevails among all the Indians of South-West America. The “medicine man” of the Hualpais of N. Arizona are in the habit of going out to pray and sing close to certain sacred rocks, against which they rub themselves, with the happy

¹ Bonwick, *Irish Druids*, 226.

² Frazer, *Pausanias*, iv. 155.

³ *Vic. Inst. Trans.*, xix. 334 ; Jevons, 139.

⁴ G. de Rialle, *Myth. Comp.*, 17, 18.

effect of reinvigorating exhausted necromantic powers. The Zunis worship beside stone-heaps associated with the worship of ancestors.¹

Semitic Stone-Worship.

45. Since the cult of stones goes back to the most primitive times, and survivals of it may be found in all parts of the world, it would be strange if no traces of it were to be met among peoples of the great Semitic family. As a matter of fact, the worship of animated or divinised stones, founded no doubt on an original fetichistic substratum, is unmistakably evident among the Semites, and the remains and historical records of it singularly abundant.² It is known, for instance, that the Arabs venerated large rude stones, and even paid divine worship to any remarkable specimen they met with.³ In particular, those which were supposed to have fallen from heaven, analogous to the Syrian betyls, were regarded by them as objects in which the Divine essence dwelt.⁴ Smaller stones, as containing a portion of this power, were considered oracular, and were used as lots to indicate the will of heaven (*cf.* Isa. lvii. 6).

¹ J. G. Bourke, *Snake-Dance of the Moquis of Arizona*, 153.

² G. de Rialle, 22 ; Tylor, *Prim. Cult.*, ii. 165.

³ Sale, *Koran, Prelim. Disc.*, 15 (1850).

⁴ Lenormant, *Hist. Anc. de l'Orient*, iii. 307. A great stone near Kairwân, N. Africa, is venerated by the Arabs as the last remnant of the city of Sabra, and is said to have groaned and bled when cut by despoilers (*Wide World Mag.*, ii. 223).

A celebrated survival of this kind is the Hajar al-Aswad, or "black stone" of the Ka'abah, which was believed to have descended from the skies. The cult of this black stone was so tenaciously observed that Mahomet in vain attempted to abolish it, and was obliged to retain it as a part of Islamism.¹ It still receives the homage of the Mussulmans, who devoutly kiss it and rub it with their forehead, and address their prayers to it as if it were Allah himself. The Ka'abah, or "Cube House," into the wall of which it is built, is called in consequence Bait Allah, the "House of God" *par excellence*, an interesting and exact parallel to Beth-El, the name of the same significance which Jacob gave to his consecrated stone at Luz.²

Sir R. Burton, in the graphic account of his visit to it, quotes an ancient testimony from Maximus of Tyre, that "the Arabians pay homage to I know not what god, which they represent by a quadrangular stone," and holds that the Black Stone and the Ka'abah are the only two survivors left of the 360 idols which composed the heavenly host of the old Arab Pantheon.³ The former, indeed, is revered by Hindus, Sabæans, Guebers, and Moslems, and probably by the Jews, who connected it with traditions concerning Abraham.⁴ According to an old belief, it

¹ Lenormant, iii. 355 ; Tylor, ii. 166.

² Lenormant, iii. 361, 359 ; *Korân*, ch. 22.

³ *Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah*, ii. 294-301 (1893).

⁴ Burton, ii. 302.

was consecrated at first to Kaywan, the planet Saturn,¹ otherwise called Zûhal,² often identified with the Hebrew El. Compare Abn-il, "the Stone of El," the name of an idol worshipped at Nisibis, "The Pillars."³

The Arabs in the time of Herodotus (iii. 8) used to take their oaths on blood-sprinkled stones to make them especially solemn and binding; these, as well as the seven sacred stones at Mina, probably stood in some relation to the seven planets of their worship, and "the temple of the seven black stones" of the Chaldæans at Erech. This custom illustrates the Hebrew word *shâba'*, to swear, originally meaning "to call *seven* to witness" (Heb. *sheba'*, seven).⁴ The Sômalis, in a similar way, swear by sacred stones. The primitive idea, no doubt, was that the deity in the stones was an ear-witness of the oath and would punish the false swearer. Thus, Joshua, when he had written the words of the law in a book, took a great stone and set it up, and said unto the people, "Behold, this stone shall be a witness against us; for it hath heard all the words of the Lord which He spake unto us: it shall be, therefore, a witness against you, lest you deny your God" (Joshua xxiv. 26, 27).

¹ *The Dabistan*, ibid. 301; Assyr. *Kaivân*, the *Kivân* or *Chiün* of Amos v. 26.

² Lenormant, iii. 359.

³ W. R. Smith, *Relig. of the Semites*, 192.

⁴ Cf. Ewald, *Antiquities of Israel*, 17.

“Stones

Which some think dead, shall all at once
With one attesting voice detect
Those secret sins we least suspect.”¹

From a like motive a black stone was formerly preserved in the cathedral of Iona, upon which solemn oaths used to be sworn and agreements ratified; ² the “Stone of Odin,” at Stennis in Orkney, and others in the Western Islands of Scotland and in Brittany, were used to give additional sanctity to an oath.³ And so the *perrons* (Lat. *petrones*) of Liège and other towns in Belgium, stone-pillars, to which a religious character was attached, and upon which people were sworn, are a direct survival of “the stones of justice” beside which municipal jurisdiction was exercised in the Middle Ages, and indirectly of the primitive menhir. Scandinavians in the Saga of Gudrun swear “by the holy white stone.”⁴

Babylonian Stone-Worship.

46. There were special reasons why stones should be held in religious veneration in Babylonia, that cradleland from which so many Semitic rites and observances were derived. Mr. Crooke has well remarked that the worship of stones may not in all places be based on exactly the same train of ideas.

¹ H. Vaughan, *Silex Scintillans*, 1654, 180 (ed. 1858).

² Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 165.

³ Forbes-Leslie, *Early Races of Scotland*, ii. 319.

⁴ G. d'Alviella, *Migration of Symbols*, 103-107.

“The conception of the worshipper will always vary in regard to it. To the savage it will be the actual home or the occasional resting-place of the spirit; to the idolater of more advanced ideas it will be little more than a symbol which reminds him of the deity without shape or form, whom he is bound to worship.” “To the ruder races, the more curious or eccentric the form of the stone is the more likely it is to be the work, and possibly the abode, of a spirit.” The same writer adds that “in a stoneless land, like the Gangetic plain, any stone is a wonder, and likely to be revered.”¹

The principle of “*ignotum pro magnifico*” led to the same results in Babylonia. The alluvial plain of the Euphrates and Tigris is so destitute of stone that any instance of its occurrence was regarded as something of a prodigy. When required for a statue it had to be fetched from most distant regions. Gudea, King of Chaldea, about 2600 B.C., records on his statue that the diorite of which it was composed was brought all the way from Magan—*i.e.* the Peninsula of Sinai.² Even a rough stone from Magan was so precious as to deserve being inscribed with a record.

A very early King of Ur, Lugal-Kigub-Nidudu, about the year 4000 B.C. dedicated in the Temple of Bel at Nippur three large rough blocks of diorite

¹ W. Crooke, *Pop. Relig. and Folklore of N. India*, ii. 164.

² Boscawen, *Vic. Inst. Trans.*, xx. 99; C. J. Ball, *Aids to Bible Students*, No. 2.

and marble, on which he had inscribed his name and a votive inscription to En-lil, "the Lord of the Storm." These stones were found within the temple enclosure by the American expedition to Babylonia 1888-90.¹

42. Professor Ihering notices that it was just in this country, where the traveller meets with hardly a single stone, that stone architecture first saw the light, thousands of years before it appeared among the Aryans; and he ingeniously argues that the step-motherly treatment of Nature, in withholding from the Babylonians the natural building materials, wood and stone, became an incentive to them to use their intellect, and artificially to provide themselves with what was necessary. Hence came the employment of clay in brick-making, inscribed cylinders, literature, civilisation. "Stone, we might almost say, has become the corner-stone of the Babylonian world."² The moral as well as historical influence of stone has been immense.³

Accordingly sacred stones, such as were worshipped in Arabia, in Phœnicia, and in Syria, were worshipped first among the Semites of Babylonia. The earliest reference to the consecration of a Bethel appears to be that mentioned in the epic of Gilgamesh, where the hero, after having been delivered from his sickness, presents a thank-offering to the gods; he

¹ J. P. Peters, *Nippur*, ii. 147, 248.

² Ihering, *Evolution of the Aryan*, 99, 110.

³ *Id.*, 143-45.

“binds together heavy stones,” and as a libation pours over the cairn a homer (of oil).¹

Sin, the Moon-god of Hârân, was represented under the form of a conical stone surmounted by a star; and the ashêrâh, or Canaanite symbol of the goddess of fertility, so often mentioned in the Old Testament (Judges vi. 25-30; 2 Kings xxi. 7, &c.), as well as the pillars of the Sun-god, Baal, were alike cones of stone. The goddess resided in the ashêrâh, just as the male-god resided in the *bêth-il*, or *hammâm*.² A conical stone of the above description has been found in the ruins of a Phœnician temple in the island of Gozzo, near Malta,³ and one is represented in a temple-court on a coin of Byblos.

The solid cones built of stones, and about thirty-five feet high, which have been found by Mr. Bent within the ruined sacred enclosures of Zimbabwe in Mashonaland, exactly correspond to a similar object similarly placed on the coin of Byblos. He considers them to be a part of the ancient Semitic worship of stones, and compares the tower called El Acara, or Alquetila, which the Arabians worshipped and attributed to their patriarch Ishmael, and the great cut stone which Maximus of Tyre says they honoured as a great god. Very similar erections are the round temples of the Cabiri in Malta, and the nuraghs, or truncated cone-towers, of Sardinia; and the huge

¹ Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, 410.

² Lenormant, *Beginnings of Hist.*, 98, 550.

³ Rawlinson, *Hist. of Phœnicia*, 116.

stones arranged perpendicularly in a circle which Palgrave found in Arabia.¹ These latter correspond exactly to the *gilgals*, or stone-circles, of Palestine, and to the prehistoric remains at Carnac, and at Avebury and Stonehenge in our own country.

There is evidence to show that the Babylonians at all events held sacred stones to be the embodiment of the gods, or the rough material which they informed. One incantation speaks of

“The great stones that are made beautiful with rejoicing,
That are fitted to become the body of the gods.” . . .

“The great stones of honour,
The holy (ones) which are full of beauty and rejoicing,
that are fitted to be gazed upon,
(which are) the flesh of the gods.”²

48. Wiedemann remarks that Semitic influence may be discerned in Ancient Egypt in the belief that sacred inanimate objects, particularly stones, may be incorporations of the Deity. Wherever Semitic colonists penetrated, Bethels or Betyls are found as objects of adoration. Thus, at Ôn, Egyptian An Ra, “House of Ra,” Hebrew Bêth-Shemesh, Greek Heliopolis), the place round which solar worship centred, a stone was believed to be an incorporation of the Sun-god. From the earliest times the *benben*,

¹ J. T. Bent, *Ruined Cities of Mashonaland*, 99, 100, 102, 162-63. Wherever the Phœnicians came baetyls are found (Perrot and Chipiez). On the widespread worship of conical and pyramidal stones, see J. G. Frazer, *Pausanias*, vol. v., pp. 318 *seq.*

² Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, 490, 491.

or stone obelisk, was regarded as a material embodiment of the divinity of the Sun, Râ; and the holy of holies in his temple was called "the house of the benben." The obelisk is apparently another phase of the conical stone of the Semites.¹ The god Set, who personified evil, was also occasionally regarded as incorporate in a stone, and the sign of an oblong stone was the determinative of his name.² The sacred stone sometimes appears under the form of a conventionalised column with a star or cross at top (like the Assyrian image of the Moon-god, Sin), and this was used from the earliest times as the ideogram of An, or Heliopolis, Heb. Ôn.³ That a stone should thus be prominently of religious significance in the Egyptian city Ôn, and also at the Palestinian Bêth-Ôn, the House of On, afterwards known as Bêth-El, is certainly suggestive of some connection. Jeremiah, referring to the stone obelisks of Ôn, says: "He (Nebuchadnezzar) shall break the *pillars* of Beth-Shemesh ('the House of the Sun') that is in the land of Egypt" (xliii. 13).⁴

It is natural to suppose that Jacob was to some extent acting on the ancient ideas in which his people had been cradled when he consecrated the

¹ A. Wiedemann, *Religion of Ancient Egyptians*, 17, 24, 153.

² Id., 154.

³ Id.

⁴ Ôn, in heathen tradition, was the place of Abraham's residence in Egypt. Joseph's wife came from Ôn, and Moses, according to Manetho, was trained as a priest there. Anu, the Assyrian Heaven-god, which I take to be identical with Ôn, was probably of solar origin (Lenormant, *Chald. Magic*, 154).

pillar-stone at Luz and called it "the House of God."
 "Henceforward it was a holy memorial of the God
 whose divinity had been mysteriously imparted to
 it." ¹

Abraham and 'Ozzā.

49. At Tāïf, not far from Mecca, a rough block of grey granite, some twenty feet long, is still regarded as an idol by the Arabs, and is called El-'Uzzā, another being known as El-Lāt, in which the goddess Al-Lāt, the Arabian Venus (the Alilat of Herodotus iii. 8), was supposed to dwell; a third being Manāt, a large sacrificial stone to which worship was given.² These idol-stones, or *menāhil*, "inns of the gods," were venerated by the Arabs from the earliest times down to the seventh century, and are referred to in the Korân:

"See ye not Lāt and 'Ozzā
 And Manāt the third besides."³

Two additional lines are said to have originally followed here, which were highly approved by the idolatrous Ishmaelites, who honoured these three as intercessory goddesses, but they were afterwards cancelled by Mahomet:

¹ Sayce, *Patriarchal Palestine*, 190, 261.

² C. M. Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, ii. 511, 515, 516; W. R. Smith, *Relig. of the Semites*, 192; Lenormant, *Hist. Anc.*, iii. 353; Sale, *Korân*, 13, 15 (ed. 1850); Hughes, *Dict. of Islam*, 192.

³ Surah, 53 and 19.

"These are exalted females
And verily their intercession is to be hoped for."¹

Al-'Ozzā was the special idol of the Kinānah tribe who dwelt near Chaibar, on the mercantile road to Syria. Its name, 'Ozzā or 'Uzzā, signifies "the Mighty One," from the root *'azza*, to be strong.²

Here a point of considerable interest arises. If we may give credence to old Arabian tradition—and it is tenaciously conservative—this deity was the only one to the service of which Abraham was devoted in the days of his ignorance, before he received his call to a higher destiny. Al Kindy, an Arabian, writing about the year 830, says:

"We know, from the book of Genesis, that Abraham lived with his people fourscore years and ten, in the land of Harrân, *worshipping none other than Al Ozza, an idol famous in that land, and adored by the men of Harrân under the name of the Moon*, which same custom prevails among them to the present day. They conceal no part of their ancestral practices, save only the sacrifice of human beings. They cannot now offer up human sacrifices openly, but they practise the same in secret."³

With the exception of the slight mistake that 'Ozzā or 'Uzzā was not the Moon, but the Moon-god's wife, this may well be accepted as correct.

¹ *Koran*, Surah, 53 and 19 (ed. Rodwell); Hughes, *Dict. of Islam*, 191.

² Sale, 13.

³ *Apology of Al Kindy*, ed. Sir W. Muir, 17. See Appendix.

Harrân was the great emporium of Babylonian ideas, being on the high road from East to West,¹ and Sin, the Moon-god, was the foremost object of its worship, as he was also at Ur. The wife, or female counterpart, of Sin (otherwise Nannar, "the Illuminer") was 'Ozzā, the personification of the Morning Star as a goddess among the Eastern Arabs, and so another form of Ishtar, the Babylonian Venus.² She was worshipped by all the Northern Arabs,³ and became the chief deity of the Saracens.

The gazelles or stags, regarded as sacred symbols at Mecca, probably with reference to their horns, seem to have been connected with the worship of Al-'Ozzā, just as in South Arabia they were sacred to 'Athtar, a masculine phase of Ishtar.⁴ The name 'Uzzā has been found on a stone image of a cow and a calf,⁵ and Ashtaroth-Karnaim—*i.e.* "Ishtar of the Horns," was an old place-name in Canaan (Gen. xiv. 5). Under the form of Astarte the cow was sacred to her.⁶ On the Sippara tablet (about 900 B.C.) Sin, Shamesh, and Ishtar—*i.e.* Moon, Sun,

¹ Renan, *Hist. of Israel*, i. 62-65.

² Hommel, *Anct. Heb. Tradition*, 117; W. R. Smith, *Rel. of the Semites*, 57. Ishtar among the Babylonians was commonly regarded as the daughter of Sin (Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, 184).

³ Smith, 264, 265.

⁴ Hommel, *Anct. Heb. Trad.*, 447.

⁵ Duncker, *Hist. of Antiquity*, i. 329. Cf. Assy. Nin-ka-si, "lady of the horned face," the Moon.

⁶ W. R. Smith, *Rel. of the Semites*, 337.

and Venus—form a triad, which is standing before a deity named Uz (? the Goat-god).¹

It is quite possible that it was from his early devotion to this goddess, 'Ozzā, that Abraham became imbued with the idea, which he afterwards so nearly carried into action, that the sacrifice of his son would be an acceptable offering to the Deity, and was, indeed, demanded of him; because 'Ozzā was a sanguinary goddess² who required to be placated by human blood. Nilus, a writer of the fifth century, mentions that his own son had a narrow escape of being sacrificed to the Morning Star (= 'Ozzā) as a burnt-offering, and that the victims had to be immolated before the sun rose—*i.e.* while the star was still shining.³ A camel was often substituted in place of the human offering by her Saracen worshippers.⁴ We are reminded here how Abraham rose up early in the morning (Gen. xxii. 3) to put his purpose into execution, and eventually sacrificed an animal as a substitute for his son. Moharric, "the Burner," seems to have been a name given to 'Ozzā with reference to the burning of human victims, in which she delighted.⁵ Professor Robertson Smith says "there are well-authenticated instances of the sacrifice of captives to Al-'Ozzā by the Lakhmite King of Al-Hira" a century later than the time of

¹ Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, 285.

² The Morning Star for some reason was associated with the God of Death (Sayce, *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, iii. 168).

³ W. R. Smith, *Rel. of the Semites*, 264, 343.

⁴ *Id.*, 344.

⁵ *Id.*, 345.

Nilus;¹ and, according to Mohammedan accounts, the Harranians in the Middle Ages annually immolated an infant.²

50. 'Azzāh, the more correct form of Gaza (as in Deut. ii. 23; 1 Kings iv. 24), was an ancient city of the Canaanites before the time of Abraham (Gen. x. 19), and seems to have had its name from 'Ozzā; like many other place-names in Palestine, derived from Babylonian deities.³ It is curious to note that, even in the fourth century, St. Porphyry saw a statue of Venus (= 'Ozzā) on a marble altar in a temple at 'Azzāh (Gaza), which was much revered, especially by women, who burned incense to it.⁴ The same writer accuses the Arabs of Dumah of sacrificing a child every year, and burying it at the foot of a menhir; perhaps meaning the idol-stone of 'Ozzā.⁵ Human sacrifices were still offered in Syria in the fourth century.⁶

51. If Abraham from his youth had been accus-

¹ W. R. Smith, *Rel. of the Semites*, 343.

² Id., 348. Purchas (S.), *His Pilgrimage*, 1614, quotes a Saracenic tradition from Constantine Porphyrogenitus which brings the stone on which their Venus ('Ozzā) was worshipped into connection with Abraham; and another from Cedrenus that this Venus, otherwise called *Chubar*, "Great," was the Morning Star and identical with Astarte (p. 264).

³ C. R. Conder, *Syrian Stone-Lore*, 33.

⁴ Id., 286.

⁵ Id., 288. Jerome mentions a temple of Marna at Gaza (*In Esa.*, lib. 7), and as the Cretans are said to have called a virgin *Marna* (Bochart, *Opera*, iii. 743), the same goddess may be referred to. The Virgo of the Zodiac is Astarte (Ishtar) (*Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, iii. 163).

⁶ Conder, 287.

tomed to the Babylonian idea of pleasing a deity by the sacrifice of one's child, and saw the altars of his Canaanitish neighbours from time to time smoking with such burnt-offerings, it is conceivable that he interpreted the call to self-surrender and self-renunciation in accordance with the facts of his daily experience and early training. The desire to prove that the servant of Jehovah, in the crucial test of giving up his dearest to death, would not be behind the heathen in zeal and self-denial, was the groundwork of the temptation. But it came from within, and not, in the first instance, from on High. It was by this desire that he was drawn away and enticed when he thought he was tempted of God to a thing evil in itself (St. James i. 13, 14). And God was pleased to make use temporarily of his mistaken zeal as a test of his utter self-surrender and sincerity, and worked it into His plan.¹ A strong prompting or uncontrollable impulse to perform some enthusiastic act of devotion, especially if at variance with the natural inclinations of flesh and blood, would still be regarded by many religionists as a call from God or the voice of the Lord. May it not have been so with the Hebrew patriarch? Would not the trial come to him on his weak side, as it almost always does, and the character of the temptation be determined by his bias or predisposition?

¹ See Delitzsch, *New Commentary on Genesis*, ii. 85, 91 Sayce, *Patriarchal Palestine*, 183.

Baetyls.

52. Bêth-el, as a name for a sacred menhir or stone pillar (in Phœnician *bêth-il*), in which a deity was believed to dwell, whether immediately derived from the name given by Jacob to his anointed stone, or a word in general use among the Canaanites and the surrounding nations, was widely extended in the form of *baitylus*, *baitylion*, or *baetyl*, and became a distinctive characteristic of Semitic belief.¹ Indeed, "the sacred stone, or *bêth-el*, is a sure sign of Semitic influence," says Professor Sayce, "wherever it is found,"² in Babylonia, in Syria, in Palestine, in Arabia, and even, it seems, in S. Africa. Sanchoniathon, as reported by Eusebius,³ speaks of the *baitulia* or *baityli* as *λίθοι ἐμψύχοι*—i.e. ensouled or animated stones; and Isidore adds that a certain dæmon or deity was the animating power, which sometimes caused them to move. Bêtylos, as a personification of Bêth-el, was reputed to be the son of Heaven and Earth, a mythological way of describing an aerolite which was particularly revered as a heaven-sent gift.

¹ Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, i. 393; G. de Rialle, *Myth. Comp.*, 23; Tylor, *Prim. Cult.*, i. 166; Kurtz, *Old Covenant*, i. 311; Theo. Parker, *Discourse of Matters pertaining to Religion*, 33 (ed. 1875); Lang, *Myth, Rit. and Rel.*, i. 325.

² *Higher Criticism and the Mon.*, 199; Bochart, *Opera*, iii. 707; Lenormant, *Beginnings of History*, 528, 530; G. Rawlinson, *Rel. of Anct. World*, ch. v.; Dillman, *Genesis*, ii. 229; Cheyne, *Isaiah*, ii. 70; Kalisch, *Leviticus*, i. 243.

³ *Præparatio Evang.*, i. 10.

Such was the image of Artemis, to the worship of which Ephesus was devoted (Acts xix. 35). The stone which was swallowed by Saturn was also called *baetylus*, and it is curious to note that *bayt-el*, the black stone of the Ka'aba, was, according to Arab tradition, originally an idol of Saturn, who is identified with El.¹ As informed by deity, such sacred stones were consulted as oracular and exponents of his will.

53. Ewald says that "sacred monuments of stone, as memorials of the Divine presence, formed from early times one of the main peculiarities of Canaan and its surrounding regions." In the primeval days when the Patriarchs lived, many of the Canaanites may have used a sacred stone as a mere monumental symbol of a god, and consecrated and anointed it, as is related of Jacob. "At that time," he says, "there must in particular have been one sacred stone of the kind in the middle of the country at Bethel, which was deemed of great sanctity, so that the Hebrews and the Canaanites struggled for centuries for its possession (as the Arabs did for the Ka'aba). It is always the name of the one patriarch, Jacob (Israel), about which the strongest recollections cling from primitive times of his having attached so great an importance to a stone, and, before all, to this stone at Bethel; and down from those earliest days when

¹ Bochart, iii. 708; J. Grimmel, *De Lapidum Cultu*, 32, 33. See also McClintock and Strong, *Cycl. of Bib. and Eccles. Literature*, s.vv. "Stone" and "Stone-worship," referring to Hölling, *De Bætylis Vett.* 1715, and Biedermann, *De Lapidum Cultu*, 1749.

the people was still a race of wandering shepherds, there was retained the designation of its God as "the Shepherd of the stone of Israel" (Gen. xlix. 24). While, however, "Jacob's stone" at Bethel was deemed so sacred in the eyes of the people, and the ancient feeling was so hard to eradicate, the Phœnicians even gave the name of *Bätylos* to an ancient god who had certainly at one time been highly revered by them at the place of this very stone, and sacred magic stones generally they termed *bätylien* [*bætyli*]; and while in Israel even this stone continually lost more and more of its sanctity, as the true religion was more and more developed from the days of Moses, stones received among the Phœnicians and other heathens an increasing superstitious reverence; their character varied more and more (pillars and portable stones being the most common); and the smaller round portable ones were deemed to be living things with which men versed in magic liked to practise their art."¹

54. Photius speaks of a *bætulum*, or oracular stone, used in lithomancy, which was carried about by a physician named Eusebius, and from which he used to receive audible responses. Its animating spirit was believed to be divine, and the "lapides divi," or "vivi," which Heliogabalus wished to carry off from the Temple of Diana at Laodicea are supposed to have been similar.² To the same class belonged the

¹ *Antiquities of Israel*, 118-19.

² E. Smedley, *The Occult Sciences*, 316.

divining-stone of Helenus, which was intelligent and uttered a cry.¹

Hebrew Stone-Worship.

55. It is strange that Dillmann should express an opinion that the Hebrews were unlike the rest of the Semites in never having practised stone-worship,² when so many distinct traces exist of evidence to the contrary. Kuenen, with much more reason, gives it as his opinion that the worship of stones, held for some reason or other to be abodes of deity, was very common among the Hebrews in early times, and that the Old Testament preserves many reminiscences of that ancient cult.

56. Some of those stones which had been regarded as inhabited by deities were rendered harmless by being absorbed into the higher form of religion and given a Jahvistic colouring.³ Thus, when Jahveh eventually came to be recognised as the only god, these holy stones, as survivals from an earlier faith, were brought into connection with Him in various ways. This new interpretation put upon sacred stones began at an early period, long before the time of Samuel.⁴ In particular, the *matztzēbah*, or consecrated stone or pillar, which was in common use in ancient Arabia, came to be regarded as a necessary instrument of the

¹ E. Smedley, *The Occult Sciences*, 315.

² On *Genesis*, ii. 228.

³ Kuenen, *Relig. of Israel*, i. 270, 271.

⁴ *Id.*, i. 393.

worship of Jahveh (Hos. iii. 4, x. 1-2; Isa. xix. 19) just as it had been associated with the *ashēra* and the "high places" (*bamōth*).¹ Afterwards, in order to mark them off more distinctly from the surrounding heathens, the Israelites, whose worship had originally the same natural basis as theirs, were forbidden the use of such pillars (Deut. xvi. 22; Micah v. 13). Especially noteworthy is the comment in Leviticus xxvi. 1: "Ye shall make you no idol, neither shall ye rear up a graven image, or a pillar (*matztzēbah*); neither shall ye place any 'figured stone' in your land to bow down unto it"; where the Septuagint, Kimchi, and others understand a "beholding (or watching) stone" to be signified—*i.e.* a guardian or tutelary stone, to avert evil from those who set it up. Another species of these *dei lapidei* was the *gillūl*, or idol-block, referred to in Deut. xxix. 17, which seems to have been a boulder that could be rolled.² The *gilgal*, again, was a cromlech or stone circle; the *mezbah*, or stone table-altar or dolmen, is still respected by the Bedouins as a "Ghoul's house."³ The Stone of Bethel was a menhir, or standing stone. This was often conical, and employed as the emblem of the gods presiding over fertility; the cup hollows which it sometimes shows were intended to contain the libations or unctions which were once poured upon

¹ W. R. Smith, *Old Test. in the Jewish Church*, 226; *Rel. of the Semites*, 183-88; Renan, *Hist. of Israel*, i. 43; Driver, *Deuteronomy*, 203-4; M. Ohnefalsch-Richter, *Cyprus, Bible and Homer*, 165, 168.

² Driver, 324.

³ Conder, *Syrian Stone-Lore*, 44-45.

them by early worshippers.¹ In Isa. lvii. 6, smooth round stones are mentioned as objects of veneration, to which drink-offerings and oblations used to be offered by the Jews of that time. With these may be compared the Arabic *asnām*, or rude blocks of stone worshipped as idols, and the Carthaginian deity, Abbadires (Aug., *Ep.* 44), said to be equivalent to *abaddir*, a baetylian stone (Hebrew, *eben 'addir*, "mighty stone.")² A rude stone monument or dolmen, of immense size, near Rabbath Ammon, is supposed to be the "Og's throne" of Deut. iii. 11 (A.V. "bedstead"),³ analogous to the great stone chair of the ancient Irish king, Ollamh Fodhla (died 1277) still existing at Loughcrew, co. Meath.⁴

57. We have already considered some of the theories which have been advanced as to the *rationale* of litholatry.

Professor Robertson Smith conjectured that the sanctity of stones may be traced up to the circumstance that they were the first and most natural altar upon which victims were slain, and over which the sacrificial blood was poured, in order that it might be drunk by the god (*cf.* Ps. l. 13). Among the Semites a single great stone sufficed for the original altar,

¹ Conder, *Syrian Stone-Lore*, 47. The Assyrian god Tartak was called "lord of the stone" (Id., 161).

² Delitzsch, *in loco*; Bochart, *Opera*, iii. 765-66. Otherwise explained as *ab-'addir*, "mighty father," or *eben dir*, "spherical stone" (Bochart, 708).

³ Conder, *Heth and Moab*, 160.

⁴ Conwell, *Tomb of Ollamh Fodhla*, 27.

and this, when affused with blood, became the abode of the present deity. Thus the stone or cairn became a convenient mark of the proper place of sacrifice, and in consequence of the chosen resort or meeting-place of the god and his worshipper.¹ From this sacred stone of rude primitive worship was developed both the altar of the sanctuary, and the pillar which frequently accompanied it as "a visible symbol or embodiment of the presence of the deity."² It was deemed essential that the worshipper should bring his offering into contact with that symbol of his presence."³

58. Further Biblical allusions, some of them, perhaps, of mythical significance, to remarkable stones are the following: "The stone of Bohan" (Joshua xv. 6); "the stone of help" (Eben-ezer)⁴ (1 Sam. vii. 12), "the great stone of Gibeon" (2 Sam. xx. 8); "the stone of the creeping thing, or serpent" (Zohemoth) (1 Kings i. 9).⁵ "Even down to the time of David," says Ewald, "the numerous local names compounded with the word *stone* (*eben*) prove, when taken along with ancient legends, what a sanctity these stones possessed in the popular estimation."⁶ So a stone is conceived as being a witness and hearing the words that are spoken (Joshua xxiv. 27), as beholding its

¹ *Religion of the Semites*, 184, 185, 195.

² *Id.*, 187.

³ *Id.*, 151.

■ Josephus calls this a "strong stone." A woman was observed catching the drops from a weeping rock at Fontainebleau for her sick child, because, as she said, "Ça donne de la force" (J. R. Morse, *Life of O. W. Holmes*, ii. 307).

■ *Bible Dict.*, iii. 1859.

⁶ *Antiquities of Israel*, 119.

votary (Lev. xxvi. 1), and being in league with the godly man (Job v. 23). Perhaps also a reminiscence of the animated nature once supposed to belong to stones may be traced in the figurative expressions in which they are regarded as capable at critical moments of crying out (Hab. ii. 11; St. Luke xix. 40).

59. The divinely-laid stone, which in a difficult passage (Zech. iii. 9) is set before Joshua the high-priest, and over which the sevenfold eyes of the Spirit of God do watch, seems to stand as a substitute for the covenant-ark. It is the vehicle of the Divine presence in the temple, the medium of union between God and His people.¹ It is supposed that some actual stone in the Holy of Holies is referred to; perhaps the Bethel stone which, according to Jewish tradition, was removed to the second temple, and was made a pedestal for the ark.² The "Mishna Yoma" (v. ii.) relates that in the most holy place of the second temple was found a stone called the Stone (or rock) of Foundation, which had been there from the days of the first prophets, and was held in the highest veneration,³ and occupied the vacant place of the ark of the covenant. The Sakhrāh, or Holy Rock, is now believed at Jerusalem to be one of the stones of Para-

¹ Orelli, *Old Test. Prophecy*, 434.

² Reland, *Palestine*, 638; McClintock and Strong, *Cycl. of Bib. Lit.*, s.v. "Bethel"; Conder, *Stone-Lore*, 213, 438; Keil and Delitzsch, *Min. Prophets*, ii. 261; *Bible Folklore*, 105.

³ Hershon, *Treasures of the Talmud*, 34.

dise, and destined at the last day to be wedded to the Ka'aba of Mecca.¹

Jahveh a Rock.

60. Baith-sour, *i.e.* Bêth-tzûr, "House of the Rock," which is used by the Septuagint in 1 Sam. xxx. 27 as a synonym for Bêth-êl—not the place with which we are now concerned, but a town of the same name in the tribe of Simeon (otherwise called Bethuel and Bethul)—seems to show that "Rock" (Heb. *tzûr*) might be substituted for "God" (Heb. *Ēl*) without altering the meaning of the place-name. This inference is established by a number of passages which demonstrate that from very early times *Tzûr*, "Rock,"² was a divine name, and used by the Israelites of Jahveh (Jehovah); just as in the blessing of Jacob He is spoken of as "the stone of Israel," with an allusion apparently to the stone of Bêth-êl (Gen. xlix. 24).

The unshakable firmness and strength of a rock or stone perhaps recommended it in the first instance as an emblem of the duration and immutability of the Eternal, and the consequent stability of His defence of His people; as Isaiah says: "Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is an everlasting

¹ Besant and Palmer, *Jerusalem*, 418, 422.

² Tyre is the same word, Heb. *Tzûr*, "the Rock," now *Sâr*. The word is similarly used as a synonym for God in South Arabia and in Sam'al (Hommel, *Anct. Heb. Trad.*, 321).

rock" (margin, "rock of ages") (xxvi. 4). Kurtz suggests¹ that stone, as being the most lasting and imperishable of materials, and so specially adapted to be used as an historical memorial and witness to distant generations, may have acquired a particular religious meaning in nature-worship. On the one side, it might become the representation of deity, regarded as an impassive and obdurate fate, or as a blind and inexorable necessity, as in heathenism; or, on the other, it might assume the higher aspect of immutable truth, unchanging constancy, never-failing help, as it did among the Jews. "The Lord is my rock. . . . My God, my strong rock, in Him will I trust" (Ps. xviii. 2). So in Job, the indomitable strength of the leviathan's heart is expressed by the phrase, "it is as firm as a stone" (xli. 24).

61. Remembering the natural basis of all religious concepts, it is not unreasonable to assume, with Kuenen—though Robertson Smith is of a contrary opinion²—that the old Canaanitish worship of stones, held to be the abode of particular deities, or animated by higher beings which temporarily or usually dwelt in them, may have given rise to the use of this image.³ If some particular rock here and there had been venerated by their predecessors, the worshippers of Jahveh were very likely to call Him emphatically and by way of protest "the Rock of Israel," as in

¹ *Hist. of Old Covenant*, i. 310; cf. M. Müller, *Science of Rel.*, 42.

² *Rel. of the Semites*, 193.

³ A. Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, i. 394-95.

2 Sam. xxiii. 3; Isa. xxx. 29. "Their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges" (Deut. xxxii. 31). "Who is a Rock, save our God" (2 Sam. xxii. 32). And so the challenge of Jahveh Himself in Isaiah (xliv. 8), "Is there a God beside Me? Yea, there is no Rock; I know not any."

Sometimes the word (*tzûr*) is used absolutely as an equivalent for God, just as in Assyrian Assur and Bel are called "great rock"¹—*e.g.* "The Rock, His work is perfect" (Deut. xxxii. 4); "My Rock, be not thou deaf to me" (Ps. xxiii. 1); "Thou, O Rock, hast established him for correction" (Hab. i. 12). Besides this use of rock as a synonym for Jehovah, the Firm One, the Faithful, Ageless, and Unchangeable, an evidence of the great antiquity of stone-cult may be traced in Semitic personal names, where "rock" is interchangeable with "God," such as Pedah-tzûr, "Rock-redeemed" (Num. i. 10), corresponding to Pedah-el, "God-redeemed" (Num. xxxiv. 28); also Eli-tzûr, "my God is a Rock" (Num. i. 5), Tzûri-el, "My Rock, God" (Num. iii. 35), and Tzûri-shaddai, "My Rock is mighty" (Num. i. 6). Hommel has found Tzûri-'addana, "My Rock is pleased," as a woman's name in South Arabia (B.C. 800) corresponding to the Hebrew Yehô-'addan, "Jahveh is pleased."²

¹ Cheyne; Driver, *Deuteronomy*, 350; *cf.* also Ps. xviii. 2, xlii. 9.

² See G. B. Gray and Hommel, *Expository Times*, viii. 556; Delitzsch, *Pentateuch*, iii. 467. It is much to be regretted that

62. The same personification is observed in a passage which recalls the Homeric line, "Thou art not sprung from an ancient oak nor from a rock" ("Odyssey," xix. 163):

"Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful,
And hast forgotten God that gave thee birth "

(*Deut.* xxxii. 18).

So an Arab tribe call themselves Beni Sakhr, "sons of the rock,"¹ and the name Bar-Tzûr, "son of the rock," has been found in a North Syrian inscription (800 B.C.).² Among the Samoans the first man came out of a stone; and some American Indians, such as the Dakotas and Oneidas, claim to be descended from animated stones, as Agdestis was in Grecian story.³

As an instance of the divine energy latent in a rock, it is related in the time of the Judges that when Gideon, at the bidding of an angel, laid flesh and unleavened cakes upon a rocky stone as on an altar, the supernatural power manifested itself, not in fire from heaven, but in fire which issued out of the rock and consumed the offering (Judges vi. 21). We find also that, when a spot had to be selected for

Kuenen should use such unnecessarily offensive language as that "Jahveh at one time had his abode in a stone" (*Rel. of Israel*, i. 394) and that Mr. Grant Allen should say, "Jehovah was originally an ancestral fetich stone." The extravagances of the latter are combated by Mr. A. Lang in the *Contemporary Review*, lvii. 353 seq.

¹ Conder, *Syrian Stone-Lore*, 324.

² *Expos. Times*, viii. 556.

³ Lang, *Myth, Rit. and Relig.*, i. 152-55; G. de Rialle, 18

an altar or a sanctuary, the preference was given to a rock or a piece of rocky ground (Judges xiii. 19). The Temple of Solomon was built upon a rock, and the sacred rock on Gerizim, used as a place of sacrifice, was the Zion of the Samaritans.¹

The latest trace of the old belief in animated rocks is probably the Jewish tradition still current in the time of St. Paul (1 Cor. x. 4), that the rock smitten by Moses followed the Israelites in the wilderness from one encampment to another in order to supply them with water, a tradition also found, in a modified shape, in "The Book of Philo concerning Biblical Antiquities" (1st cent.). Whether the "living stones" of St. Peter (1 Peter ii. 5) is a far-off reminiscence of the primitive belief is not so obvious.

¹ Conder, *Syrian Stone-Lore*, 170. On stone-worship the following books may be consulted: Jevons, *Hist. of Religion*, 131-143; Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 165 seq.; De Rougemont, *Le Peuple Primitif*, i. 512 seq.; W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, 201 seq.; J. G. Frazer, *Pausanias*, iv. 155; Bonwick, *Old Irish Religion*, 211-24; H. Pierson, *De heilige Steenen in Israel*, 1864, and *Baetylien-dienst*, 1866; A. Bastian, *Steincultus in der Ethnographie*, 1868; Grimm, *De lapidum cultu apud Patriarchas*, 1853; J. B. Waring, *Stone Monuments*, 1870.

PART III

THE ANOINTING

The Rationale of Anointing

63. THERE are a certain number of pivot words around which the spiritual history of the world may be said to revolve. The cardinal one of these, beyond question, is the word "Christ," with its derivatives, "Christian" and "Christianity." And the root-idea of this important series of words, as far as the investigation of Jewish and Christian antiquities is concerned, has its *locus classicus* in the passage we are considering.

In putting ourselves through the usual catechism of questions, all is easy up to a certain point. Why am I called a "Christian"? Because I am a professed follower of "Christ," *Christianus*, "an adherent of Christ," as the Latin word implies. And how did "the Christ" obtain His appellation? *Χρίστος* (Christos) is the Greek rendering of the Hebrew word *Mâsíach* (Messiah), "The Anointed." For what reason was Jesus so called? Because among

the Jewish people, to whom He came, the great officers of the theocracy, the high priest, the prophet, and the king were consecrated and appointed to their respective functions by a special rite, which consisted in being anointed with a holy oil; and these three offices Jesus bore, as being the Man appointed by God to be the Mediator for His people.¹ With these elementary truths we are generally familiar from our childhood.

But to an inquiring mind some further questions suggest themselves at this point, which are not so easily answered. How came *oil* to be considered the proper vehicle for consecrating or setting apart for divine offices? What is the *rationale* of anointing? What was the primitive line of thought which actuated man in early times to pour oil or some unctuous substance on a person or object, in order to make him or it sacred?

It is generally assumed as an axiom of faith that oil is *the* consecrating element, and that somehow, in the eternal fitness of things, Christos is the title inevitably applicable to our Redeemer, and one, therefore, that is removed above the reach of inquiry and investigation. Whereas, as a matter of fact, it is, like all other words used of the Deity, an accommodation and condescension to human infirmity. It is rooted in the hoary past—based and grounded upon the rude ideas of man in the infancy of his

¹ Justin Martyr, *Dial. cum Trypho*, ch. 86; Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.*, i. 3.

race, when he was still groping and feeling after spiritual truth.

Anointing in the Old Testament.

64. A careful examination, therefore, is required of the psychological process of the primitive races, as the outcome of which the practice of anointing was evolved. As a sacerdotal rite it meets us at the foundation of the Mosaic system. Moses was commanded to consecrate the tabernacle and all its implements and vessels with a "holy anointing oil" (Exod. xxx. 25-29). In this way "they were devoted to sanctity; the divine power rested upon them; the spirit of God filled them."¹ And thus it was that Aaron and his sons were set apart to the priest's office, and Saul to the kingly function. But this symbolic rite was not introduced by Moses for the first time. The religious use of oil goes back to a period long anterior to the time of the patriarchs. The first mention of it in the Bible is in connection with the action of Jacob at Bethel.² When he awoke from his dream, he first of all took the stone which he had put under his head and set it up for a monu-

¹ Kalisch, *in loco*; Hengstenberg, *Christology*, iii. 124 seq.

² S. Augustine says: "This was propheticall: he did not Idolatrize in pouring oyl on the stone, nor made it a God, nor adored it, nor sacrificed unto it, but because the name of Christ was to come of *Chrisma*, that is unction, of that was this a very significant mystery" (*Of the Citie of God*, trans. by J. H[ealey]. 1620, p. 613).

ment or *matztzebâh*, evidently tracing some association between the vision and the stone. He conceived the universally diffused presence of God as somehow manifested and concentrated in that rude natural object, so that it had become an habitation of Deity. He thereupon proceeded to a further act, and poured oil upon its top.¹ In order to mark his sense of the holiness and awfulness of the spot, he called it "Bêth-êl," "the House of God," and then he consecrated it, or endowed it with a character of sanctity, by pouring oil over the stone-monument. But the rite would have been an arbitrary and unmeaning piece of will-worship if Jacob had performed it then *motu suo*, without any antecedent use or custom which would make it significant to him. It must have been already recognised and established as an act of religion. And there is no suggestion made that it was by a divine revelation or prompting that he adopted this ritual. He evidently conceived that oil was an emblem of holiness, and had the power of imparting a sacred character to the object anointed.

65. We may compare this in passing with similar usages among other peoples.² Pausanias states that there was a sacred stone at Delphi, over which oil

¹ W. R. Smith, *Old Test. in the Jewish Church*, 226 ; Renan, *Hist. of Israel*, i. 43.

² On anointing sacred stones and pillars, see W. Pleyte, *Religion des Pré-Israelites*, 166 seq. ; Budge, *Book of the Dead*, p. 1., note 3 ; Lucian, *Alexandr.*, p. 238 ; H. Spencer, *Sociology*, i. 791 (3rd ed.) ; Cheyne, *Isaiah*, ii. 70 (1882).

used to be poured every day.¹ Theophrastus, in his "Characters" (xvi.), says that the superstitious man, "if he meets with a consecrated pillar at cross-roads, falls on his knees, pours a deal of oil upon it, and performs his devotions."² Arnobius confesses that in his heathen days he never saw a stone anointed with oil without addressing prayers to it.³

Outside the Semitic race we find also in the primitive Aryan religion the head of the family, who was also the priest, erecting a stone in the open air,⁴ which made the place sacred where it was set up, and this altar he consecrated by anointing it with liquid butter or *ghee*.⁵

Babylonian Anointing.

66. Now Jacob, in pouring oil over the stone at

¹ x. 24, 5. Pausanias also mentions that the black Demeter at Phigalia was honoured with the effusion of oil (viii. 42, 5). A Malagasy priest anoints his idol with oil to propitiate it (Sibree, *Madagascar*, 381); the ancient Egyptians (Wilkinson, i. 275), the Bhils and Negroes of Sierra Leone do the same (H. Spencer, *Eccles. Instit.*, 682). Hearths gleaming with oil were sacred to the Furies in their temple at Areopagus (*Æsch.*, *Eum.* l. 773, see Paley, *in loco*). Cf. also P. D. C. De la Saussaye, *Science of Religion*, pp. 99, 438; Stanley, *Jewish Church*, i. 60.

² *Characters*, trans. N. Rowe, p. 333 (1776).

³ *Adv. Gentes*, i. 39; cf. Alexander, *Isaiah*, 835.

⁴ Similar Bethel stones revered by the Nabatheans have been found in Arabia, one of them engraved with a dedication to the great God Aûda (or Aera) (C. M. Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, i. 121, 187).

⁵ Lenormant, *Book of Genesis*, Introd. p. xxv.; Delitzsch, *New Com. on Genesis*, ii. 165; Aug., *De Civ. Dei*, xvi. 38.

Bethel, was following (we may be sure) the mode of procedure received from his ancestors. Indeed, it would have had no meaning if it were then done for the first time, and on the spur of the moment. He had, no doubt, seen oil thus ritually employed by his father Isaac and his grandfather Abraham. And as religious rites are always deeply rooted in the past, we would expect to find that Abraham brought this custom of anointing with him from his original home in Harran and Ur of the Chaldees. We know, indeed, that the Moon-god, Sin, who was the special god of Harran (the very place towards which Jacob was turning his steps, xxviii. 10) was represented by a cone-shaped pillar of stone. We know also that these conical stones used to be consecrated, by oil being poured over them, by the Akkadians or Ancient Assyrians, among whom Abraham had been brought up. Sayce mentions, in his valuable "Hibbert Lectures,"¹ that these pillars, or *ashêrim*, when thus anointed, are frequently spoken of in the Assyrian inscriptions under the name of *kisallu*, a word borrowed from the Akkadian *ki-zal*, which means "place of oil" or "anointing." Indeed, there was a special class of priest among the Assyrians, who were called *pâsisu*, or "anointers," whose duty it was to purify with oil both persons and things. The cleansing of objects, by anointing them with oil, was considered a matter of primary importance—even the stone tablets and foundation-stones were ordered to be cleansed in this

¹ P. 410; *Higher Crit. and the Monuments*, 279.

way.¹ Gilgamesh, in the Assyrian epic, builds an altar of heavy stones, and consecrates it by pouring a homer over it in libation.²

So when Ea instructs his son how he may acceptably present himself before the face of Anu, the god of heaven, he tells him that he must sanctify himself with oil:

“ Oil they will offer thee—anoint thyself with it.”³

In a similar way the Fijian oils himself when he goes to consult his god,⁴ that he may receive a favourable response.

There is hardly room for doubt, then, that it was from the Akkadians, or ancient Assyrians, that the custom came to the Hebrews, and that a reminiscence of the old heathen rite of his forefathers may be traced in Jacob's action at Bethel. There is no suggestion in the narrative that it was a procedure commanded or sanctioned by God, however it may have been afterwards.

Ritual Significance of Oil.

67. At this point we cannot help asking the question, How did men come in all parts of the world,

¹ *Hib. Lect.*, p. 61.

² *Id.*, p. 410. The Emperor Julian, when visiting Troy about A.D. 362, noticed the statue of Hector as being anointed with fat (Schliemann, *Ilios*, 181).

³ Boscawen, *Bible and the Monuments*, 173.

⁴ J. G. Wood, *Nat. Hist. of Man* (America, &c.), 291.

from the earliest times, with such strange unanimity, to have attributed this sanctifying and consecrating power to *oil*, ointment, or melted fat? Whence this "constant connection in religious thought between unction and sanctification?"¹ Bishop Pearson² can only suggest that its fitness arose from the quality which oil possesses of arresting decay. "In respect to matter," he says, "they (the Rabbins) give two causes why it was *oil* and not any other liquor that was employed for anointing, first, because of all others it signifies the greatest glory and excellency; and, secondly, because it preserves not only itself but other things from corruption, and hence it is the most proper emblem of eternity."

These reasons are hardly satisfactory. They probably did not satisfy Pearson himself. He quotes them merely as the reasons assigned by others: "They tell us"; "They observe." It is obviously not enough to say that oil signifies glory and excellence. What we want to know is, *Why* does it signify *that*, and indeed much *more*, consecration, holiness, participation in the Divine nature? "I conceive," says Pearson again, "that the first signification of the word [*Χριστός*] among the Greeks hath not been hitherto sufficiently discovered."³ Canon Cook, while admitting that it is not easy to say what may have been the full significance of the act in Jacob's mind, thinks, rather preposterously, that the later connec-

¹ Canon Cook, *Speaker's Comm. on Gen.*, xxviii. 18.

² *On the Creed*, p. 149.

³ *Id.*, 120.

tion in religious thought between unction and sanctification may be the probable solution.¹

Various other explanations have been given. Fairbairn, in his "Typology" (ii. 236), regards the religious use of oil as growing naturally out of its everyday use in the East, where it is regarded not only as imparting agreeable and refreshing sensations to the wearied body, but as really conducive to physical health and vigour. Hence its common use in Palestine and in Egypt as a mark of respect in welcoming a guest. As the anointing oil—"the oil of gladness"—refreshed and invigorated the body for active labour, so it became (it is supposed) an apt symbol for the spirit, replenishing the soul with grace, and enabling it for God's service. "It was significant," says Dr. Plumptre,² "not of refreshment only, but of *strength*, of the gift which a man needed for fulfilling a special task."

Dr. Kalisch's view is very similar. He thinks that oil was naturally chosen to typify *life*, owing to its remedial and vivifying powers, and so became an emblem of the life-giving spirit of God. Thus anointing became synonymous with imparting the Divine spirit, sanctifying, or bestowing holiness. Hence followed its use in setting apart *objects* for religious purposes, or in appointing *persons* for sacred services.³

¹ *Speaker's Commentary on Gen.*, xxviii. 18.

² *Christ and Christendom*, p. 103.

³ *Commentary on Leviticus*, pt. I, p. 83. So Kurtz, *Hist. of Old Covenant*, i. 309.

Ewald ("Antiquities of Israel," p. 108) can only suggest that olive-oil (which, as being the natural product of their land, was always used by the Jews) was considered appropriate for purposes of blessing and consecrating, as being the symbol of happy, luxuriant growth, and so the rich blessing of God (Ezek. xxxii. 14). Kalisch further adds that oil, as implying richness and fatness, was an emblem of power and success when used for consecrating *things*; of peace and reconciliation when used in consecrating *priests*.¹

Now, all these explanations seem to me unsatisfactory. They do not go to the root of the matter. They only refer to the use of oil as applied to the human *body*; whereas the *earliest* ritual anointing is *not* of *persons*, but of *inanimate* objects.

We must seek, therefore, for an explanation which goes back farther, and has a deeper religious significance.

Fat in Religious Rites.

68. The late Professor Robertson Smith² studied the philosophy of these primitive conceptions very closely, and it is upon his conclusions that the theory is based which is here advanced.

First of all, it must be noted that olive, or vegetable oil, was only used in the Jewish ritual as a *substitute* for *animal* oil or fat. *Shemen*, the Hebrew word for oil, with reference to its efficacy and virtue,

¹ *Comm. on Exodus*, p. 552.

² *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 359-66.

meant originally fat, or fatness.¹ The olive-tree, in Jotham's parable (Judges ix. 9) claimed its sovereignty on account of its *fatness*, wherewith they honour God and man. Vegetable sacrifices were inefficient, as the rejection of Cain's offering shows, and the *oldest* unguents were always animal fats (Robertson Smith). Now, in the Levitical code, a *special* symbolical meaning was attributed to the fat of the sacrifice. The rule was laid down: "All fat belongs to the Lord" (Lev. iii. 16), and when thus set apart for the purposes of the altar, it was forbidden for human consumption, just as *blood* was. The interdict was: "Ye shall eat neither fat nor blood" (Lev. iii. 17), and both alike are repeatedly called "the food of the Lord."²

Man is not to share what belonged to God. The fat and the blood were deemed the most essential and representative part of the animal for sacrificial purposes, because the *fat*, as well as the blood, was an index of the life and strength of the animal. If man was to abstain from the blood because it was identified with the *life*, so he was to devote the *fat* because it was believed to express the health, the vigour, and the vitality of the victim.³

We are not, perhaps, generally familiar with this early idea, that the *fat* was the life, as well as the blood. The student of religions must be prepared to face

¹ Gesenius, p. 835 b: Kiel, *Minor Prophets*, i. 268, note. So "My flesh faileth of fatness" (*shemen*, oil) (Ps. cix. 24).

² Lev. iii. 11, 16; Ezek. xlv. 7, 15.

³ Kalisch, *Leviticus*, i. 93.

many strange primitive conceptions, if he is to understand their later developments. He must not be surprised, or shocked, if he finds that the origin and explanation of many a Scriptural rite, recognised in the law of God, may be traced up to an antecedent¹ and more ancient rite in use among the heathen.

Evolution of Unction.

69. It is God's way to speak to men through the instrumentality of human language and human modes of thought, and to base on these a higher and more spiritual revelation. "First that which is natural and afterwards that which is spiritual," is the law of evolution. This is so well known that I need not dwell upon it.

Accordingly, all God's ritual ordinances were founded, probably, upon practices already existent and widely dispersed among the nations of antiquity. Many rude and elementary customs of natural religion (folk-lore we might call them), through which men groped darkly after God, were taken up and

¹ Robertson Smith, *Rel. of the Semites*, p. 4. So in the Assyrian sacrifices the fat is reserved for the god (Boscawen, *Dust of Ages*, 21). In Kurtz's view the fat was appropriated to Jehovah's sacrifices as being the noblest, best and most sublimated portion, the flower of the flesh (*Sacrificial Worship of the Old Test.*, 222). Even Abel brought the *fat* of the firstlings of his flock as a sacrifice. Generally the "fat" of anything (wheat, land, wine, &c.) denotes in Scripture the choicest and best of it (Ps. lxxxi. 16; 2 Sam. i. 22, &c.).

embodied, with a new and more elevated meaning, in the ceremonial of the Chosen People. We may well believe that many primitive ideas, in which Abraham had been reared among the Assyrians, which Moses had learnt among the Egyptians, lie embedded in the substratum of the Hebrew Bible.¹ So it is with the ordinance as to the fat. The primitive law of sacrifice was, that when a victim was offered to the gods, the flesh generally, when roasted on the altar, was consumed by the worshippers in a sacramental meal; but certain important parts of the animal were set apart for the god, which must not be eaten. These were the parts in which the *life* was supposed to dwell. First of all, the *blood*, which is the life; it was poured over the heap of stones, or altar, as a liquid oblation, to be exhaled and drunk by the god.² And besides the blood, the *fat*, especially the fat which surrounded the vital organs, that of the omentum, the midriff, and the kidneys, in which the feelings and emotions were supposed to dwell—this *fat*, as being a *special* seat of life, must not be eaten by the worshipper, but be wholly consumed on the altar. Etherealised in the fire, its essence and virtue ascended in the fragrant smoke and became food for the deity (Lev. iii. 14-17). Blood and fat, therefore, as being

¹ Maimonides declares that Moses adapted idolatrous practices to a purer worship (J. Jacobs, *Studies in Biblical Archaeology*, 1894, p. 25).

² A. B. Ellis, *Ewe-speaking Peoples of W. Africa*, p. 79; Sibree, *Madagascar*, 390.

instinct with a certain spiritual potency, must only be used externally.

The fat, as being the seat of life, and imbued with the living virtue of the animal, was the special altar food of the god. In its efficacy it was almost equivalent to the blood itself, and it could be used instead of the blood for anointing a sacred stone or altar.

The Madagascans have exactly the same idea as the Jews, holding the fat and blood to be equally propitiatory; and they anoint stones and tombs with both, as an offering to the spirits of the dead.¹

Similarly, when the Jewish priest was to be consecrated, he was sprinkled with the *blood* of the sacrifice, mingled with oil, which here took the place of *fat* (Exod. xxix. 21); but the oil and the blood were of equal importance.

Oil or Fat and Blood.

70. In later times it became customary to use vermilion, ruddle, or some other red pigment as a substitute for blood, in conjunction with oil. In India it is a frequent act of worship to rub these two ingredients on a sacred stone, or idol, or implement, or the person of the worshipper and his cattle.² Among some savage tribes, when a stone becomes the permanent dwelling-place of the god, it is sometimes

¹ Sibree, *Madagascar and its People*, 389.

² Crooke, *Pop. Relig. and Folklore of N. India*, i. 96, 108, 109, ii. 166, 191, 308; *Asiatic Soc. Trans.*, i. 73 (1827).

merely painted red, instead of being sprinkled with the blood of sacrifice¹ which once had ensured his presence. And so the smearing of oil in place of fat is, as Stade notes, a rudimentary form of a sacrifice to a spirit dwelling in the stone.² Sometimes the skin of the victim was wrapped round the idol or stone, to ensure the god's presence in it (as by the Greeks), but the idea is the same³—impartation of the vital virtue.

Anointing of Stones.

Hence to pour either oil or blood upon a stone was to consecrate it as an altar or "holy memorial of the god whose divinity had been mysteriously imparted to it."⁴ That anointed stone, as the Semite believed, was henceforth to be venerated as a Bêth-êl, wherein the god was present, and his power was immanent.⁵ The ancient Indians, in like manner, had sacrificial stones, *grâvan*, sacred to Agni, who was represented by them and took cognisance of invocations addressed to them.⁶

In subsequent ages probably, the primitive significance being forgotten, the pouring oil on a sacred stone was a symbolic means of doing it honour and homage, as the Hebrews applied unguents to the head

¹ F. B. Jevons, *Hist. of Rel.*, 133, 140, 170.

² Dillmann, *Genesis*, ii. 227.

³ Jevons, 285.

⁴ Sayce, *Patriarchal Palestine*, 190; Jevons, *Hist. of Rel.*, 291.

⁵ Duncker, *Hist. of Antiquity*, i. 330, 360, 412, 531, 567.

⁶ M. Müller, *Contributions to Science of Mythology*, 481.

of a guest in token of dignity and festal rejoicing, and as the Arabs, with a religious significance, anoint the idol with a stroking movement of the hand. The Bordeaux pilgrim in the fourth century saw a perforated stone at Jerusalem, "to which the Jews come every year and anoint it."¹ But unguents, as a substitute for sacred suet, are here equivalent to blood.²

71. The Phœnicians also, as Sanchoniathon testifies, used to consecrate stones by anointing them with oil;³ the Greeks and other heathen peoples revered "greased stones,"⁴ the "*lapides effigiatos et unctos et coronatos*" of Minucius Felix, probably meaning terminal or wayside pillars.⁵ Lucian speaks of a superstitious man who, "if he only saw anywhere a stone anointed or garlanded, forthwith would fall down and worship it."⁶ Something similar seem to have been the white stones glistening with fat which were set before the heroic palaces of Homer ("*Odyssey*," iii. 408); and the hearths resplendent with fat which the Venerable Maids, the Furies, had in their temple at Athens.⁷ The Bhils and the negroes of Sierra Leone think they can propitiate their rude idols by smearing them with oil.⁸ Similarly, in the Rig-Veda (viii. 74, 2) Sarpīh-

¹ W. R. Smith, *Relig. of the Semites*, 214; H. Macmillan, *Roman Mosaics*, 114, 115.

² Smith, 461.

³ Eusebius, *Præp. Evang.*, i. 10; De Sola and Lindenthal, *Genesis*, 175, 226.

⁴ Clem. Alex., *Works*, ii. 423 (Ante-Nic. Lib.).

⁵ So Jacobus Ouzelius, *in loco*, p. 15.

⁶ *Alexandr.*, p. 238.

⁷ Æsch., *Eum.* 773.

⁸ H. Spencer, *Eccles. Institutions*, 682.

âsutim, a title given to Mitra, is understood to mean an idol "anointed with butter"¹; and the old Norse gods were honoured by being besmeared with fat: "While the kings sat drinking their wives sat at the fireside and warmed the gods, and some besmeared them with grease."² In Norway a buttered stone was sacred to a giantess.³ A survival of these old beliefs is traceable in the German word *oel-götze* (oil-idol) used for a booby or lubber.

Fat in Folk Medicine.

72. Many savages imagine that they can absorb the life and nature of another by drinking his blood or by rubbing on his fat.⁴ The Arab and East African anoints himself with the fat of a lion, that he may acquire his boldness;⁵ the Australian rubs himself with the caul fat of a slain enemy, in order that his strength or other qualities may be communicated to him. The Abyssinian rubs himself over with elephant's grease, that he may become strong, like him.⁶

73. Similarly, unction, or anointing,⁷ was originally

¹ Oldenberg.

² Fridthjof's Saga, 9; Du Chaillu, *The Viking Age*, i. 375-76. Grimm, *Teut. Myth.*, 63, thinks these were cakes formed to represent gods.

³ Grimm, 557.

⁴ Budge, *Book of the Dead*, p. lxxxii.

⁵ Frazer, *Golden Bough*, ii. 86, 88.

⁶ Greenwood, *Curiosities of Savage Life*, ii. 45.

⁷ The Druids used to smear the statues of their gods, &c., with the blood of slaughtered criminals (Lucan, *Phars.* I., iii. 399; Baring-Gould, *Origin of Relig. Belief*, i. 379).

nothing else but the application of sacrificial fat, in order that its living virtue may pass on to some object that was to be consecrated. It was the means of communicating the life-giving essence of the victim to the worshipper. Nay, by a curious reflex action, the *deity* was conceived to be identified with the sacrifice. By inspecting its entrails the will of the god could be known. Accordingly, since the fat and the blood of the victim were assimilated and absorbed by the *god*, to apply a portion of these to the worshipper was to make him participate sacramentally in the nature of the god and to produce kinship with him.¹ By a theurgic process, the same life which was shared by the god was shared with the man.

Thus, to anoint with the sacrificial fat is to assimilate to God and impart divine qualities, because fat is the vehicle for transmitting the life which had been incorporated by the deity.

74. An old Babylonian incantation prescribes for a disease of the head that, among other ingredients, human flesh and semen should be mixed together with oil and rubbed on the body with pure hand.² The vital potency of these things would thus be imparted to the part deficient in strength. Very similar to this prescription is the Momiâi, or "oil of Vishnu" of the Hindus, made of the fat and essential juices of a human body, and used as a sovereign remedy for

¹ Baring-Gould, *Origin of Relig. Belief*, i. 410-11; Robertson Smith, *Relig. of the Semites*, 247, 320, 365, and especially 295-96.

² Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, 462.

wounds ;¹ and the "oil of man," manufactured from the fat of a criminal, as a specific for scrofula and rheumatism.² It is a widely extended custom among savages to rub themselves with the liquefied fat of a corpse, that in this way they may incorporate into themselves some qualities of the deceased ;³ and the Australian natives will let the fat of an executed criminal drop on them as communicative of strength. In particular they believe, like the Hebrews, that the fat about the kidneys, as the centre of life, is of chief potency, and if eaten will convey the strength of the dead man to the eater.⁴ And so the Chinese, the Maoris, and others think they can absorb the courage and other qualities of a slain foe by partaking of his blood or heart.⁵

Anointing of Persons.

75. The Tanist, or Chieftain Stones of the Scots, were held to give a sacred attestation to the king's coronation. Such was the Lia Fail, or "Stone of Destiny," and the Mora Stone of the Swedish kings at Upsala.⁶ Both stones and kings were consecrated alike with oil. Among the Ancient Egyptians both

¹ Crooke, *Pop. Relig. of N. India*, ii. 176-77.

² *Notes and Queries*, 8th ser. x. 314. "Oil of man" had formerly another meaning (Cotgrave, *Potage de la Bite*).

³ E. S. Hartland, *Legend of Perseus*, ii. 313.

⁴ C. Lumholtz, *Among Cannibals*, 272, 278.

■ Denys, *Chinese Folklore*, 67 ; Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, 151. ⁶ H. Macmillan, *Roman Mosaics*, 125.

the images of the gods and kings at their coronation were divinised by being anointed.¹ As Mr. Jevons correctly puts it, in his excellent "History of Religion": "The blood or the fat of the victim, or the oil obtained from it, might be sprinkled or smeared on the altar-stone, or on the lintel of a house, to indicate the presence and protection of its god; and, in the same way, the oil used in the consecration of a king indicated that it was not in virtue of his own merits, but of the entry in him of the divine spirit, that 'divine right' was bestowed upon him and that he became king."²

Accordingly among the Israelites the kingly dignity was a gift of grace direct from God, and its reception was a consecration, as in the case of the priest and the prophet, both of whom were also anointed. Oil being a symbol of the Divine nature and spirit, represents in the regal consecration "the unimpeachable divine majesty transferred to the person of the anointed one." Only the king is called absolutely "the Lord's anointed" (1 Sam. xxiv. 6);³ as certainly as God stood to Israel in a special covenant-relation, so must its rightful king stand in nearer relation to Jahveh, being the depositary and representative of Divine majesty.⁴

¹ De la Saussaye, *Science of Religion*, 438.

² *Hist. of Rel.*, 285.

³ It has been noted that the first to use the expression "Anointed of God" was the mother of him who was to anoint Israel's first King (1 Sam. ii. 10).

⁴ Orelli, *Old Testament Prophecy*, 149 (Clark's ed.).

Symbolism of Oil.

76. We are now in a position to understand the scriptural use of *oil* as a substitute for *fat*.

(1). It is the accepted symbol for a communication of the spirit of God and Divine strength. The Holy Spirit *really* imparts the Divine nature, as *institutionally* oil was conceived to do. To anoint with *oil* is to communicate spiritual power and sanctity, to bestow the very life of God.¹ It means to *qualify* or *enable*, as well as to inaugurate. And so, when our Blessed Lord was marked out for His office by the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Him at His baptism, the Bible, speaking after the manner of men, says that He was "*anointed*." He says Himself: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me" (St. Luke iv. 16; Isa. lxi. 1); and St. Peter tells "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power" (Acts x. 38).

Similarly, in the Old Testament, we read that when Samuel took the oil and anointed Saul he said: "The Spirit of the Lord cometh upon thee, and thou art changed into another man" (1 Sam. x. 1-6). He was not only *appointed* king, but at the same time *endowed* with kingly graces. And so, when the same prophet took the horn of oil and anointed David, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him from that day forward (1 Sam. xvi. 13).² Even Cyrus, a heathen king, is

¹ The spiritual unction is the Divinity itself (Pearson).

² Hengstenberg, *Christology*, iii. 125, 135; Pusey, *Daniel*, 182.

called in Isaiah the Lord's "Christ," or "anointed" (xlv. 1), because he was called and *enabled* to do God's work on behalf of His people. Thus, in the words of Bishop Pearson, unction signifies not only "a divine election," but "a divine *influx*." For "the ancients tell us that this oil is the Divinity itself, and in the language of the Scripture it is the Holy Ghost."

The Christ.

And thus Jesus became "the Christ." At His baptism, like one suffused with holy chrism, the Spirit of God was given to Him without measure. His human nature was filled with all the fulness of God. Thus He was consecrated to His great mediatorial work. "In the power of a spiritually endowed humanity" He was designated to the three great offices of the theocracy as our Divine King and Prophet and Priest, to rule and to teach and to atone.

By a parity of reasoning, all Christians, in their measure, are said by St. John to "have an *unction* (or chrism) from the Holy One" (1 John ii. 20; *cf.* 2 Cor. i. 21), inasmuch as they have received the Holy Spirit, and have been made (as St. Peter says) "partakers of the Divine nature" (2 Pet. i. 4). And this anointing (he says) "Which ye have received of Him abideth in you" (v. 27).

Accordingly St. Ambrose and St. Jerome do not

¹ *On the Creed*, p. 146.

scruple to speak of Christians as "*Christi*" or "anointed," justifying its use by appealing to Ps. cv. 15, "Touch not mine *anointed*," where the reference is to the chosen people generally (Lxx. *χρίστοι*, Vulg. *Christi*).

The "Recognitions of Clement" (about 220 A.D.) thus explains why Jesus was called Christ: "As there are certain names common to kings, as Arsaces among the Persians, Cæsar among the Romans, Pharaoh among the Egyptians, so among the Jews a king is called *Christ*. And the reason of this appellation is this: Although, indeed, He was the Son of God, and the beginning of all things, He became Man; Him first God anointed with oil which was taken from the wood of the tree of life; from that anointing, therefore, He is called Christ."²

Uction of the Sick and Dead.

77. Again, (2) oil being the vehicle for imparting strength, we can see how it came to be used ceremonially in *healing* human infirmities. The Apostles "anointed with oil many that were sick and healed

¹ *Dict. Christ. Antiq.*, s.v. "Faithful," i. 656. See Taylor, *Works*, xi. 258 (ed. 1828).

² Bk. i., ch. 44. This seems to be the germ of the "oil of mercy" afterwards so fertile in legend. See also Cheyne's remarks on "the Anointed One," *Origin of Psalter*, 338. In the Talmud, anointing with oil is mentioned as an ordinary medicinal application, sometimes with charms, for those afflicted with headache and other maladies (J. Lightfoot, *Works*, iii. 316).

them" (St. Mark vi. 13); and St. James recommended the elders of the Church to keep up the practice (Jas. v. 14).

Pliny says: "Among the medicinale parts which be common to all living creatures their fat deserveth greatest commendation; but especially swine's grease, which in old time they used with great ceremony and religion. Certes, even at this day, there is a solemn ceremony, that the bride newly wedded, as she entereth into her husband's house, should strike the side-posts therewith for good luck sake" ("Natural History," trans. Holland, 1634, ii. 319).

This ritual use of oil for imparting the healing power of God was retained in the Church till comparatively recent times. The first Prayer-book of Edward VI. authorises the priest to "annoynte the sicke person upon the forehead or breast," saying, "As with this visible oyle thy body outwardly is annoynted: so our heavenly father almyghtye God, graunt of his infinite goodnesse, that thy soule inwardly may be annoynted with the holy gost, who is the spirit of al strength, coumfort, reliefe and gladnesse. And vouchesafe for his great mercy . . . to restore unto thee thy bodely helth and strength." With a heathen rite, curiously similar to this Christian "survival," and based, no doubt, on the same idea, a Samoan priest visits the sick person and anoints with oil the part affected.¹ The extreme unction of the Romish Church,

¹ J. B. Stair, *Old Samoa*, 165; Greenwood, *Curiosities of Savage Life*, ii. 71. Pope Innocent I. said: "It is allowable not

intended as a passport to the next world, is essentially different, and seems to correspond to the custom of *anointing the dead*, which prevailed among the ancient Egyptians,¹ and apparently among the Jews also.² The ointment was designed to be a life-imparting antidote to the dishonour of the grave.³ In that most ancient ritual, the Egyptian "Book of the Dead," the funeral ceremony says of the deceased: "O all ye *unguents* make ye him strong; cause him to gain the mastery over his body, and make his eyes to be opened."⁴ Again, the embalmer says: "The thick oil which comes upon thee furnishes thy mouth with life" (Budge, "The Mummy," 165).

In India the body is still sometimes carefully anointed with oil before it is laid in the coffin;⁵ and a similar practice seems to have obtained among the Jews, as we may infer from our Lord's remark: "In that she hath poured this ointment on my body she did it for my burial" (St. Matt. xxvi. 12). Among the ancient Greeks, the bones, when collected from the funeral pyre, were either spread over with a layer of fat or moistened with oil and wine;⁶ and the Romans,

only for priests but for all Christians to make use of the holy oil of Chrism, by anointing, in their own needs or those of their friends" (*Ep.* i, n. 8).

¹ Wilkinson, i. 276.

² Clem. Alex., *Pædagogos*, bk. 2, ch. 8. So the natives of the Marquesas Islands (Wood, *Nat. Hist. of Man* (Australia, &c.), 392).

³ St. Mark xvi. 1; St. Luke xxiii. 56.

⁴ Budge, *Book of the Dead*, p. cxli.

⁵ Crooke, *Pop. Rel. of N. India*, ii. 62.

⁶ *Odyssey*, xxiv. 72; *Il.*, xxiii. 253.

as a last solemnity, poured out a libation of oil over the pyre, or subsequently over the grave.¹ Some have conjectured that the oil in these rites was intended to convey comfort and strength to the feeble ghost of the departed;² and it may have been with this idea that the cuplike depressions often found on ancient stone monuments in France and elsewhere, survivals from the Neolithic age,³ used to be filled with butter or lard as offerings to the shades beneath. So, according to Plutarch, Alexander, when he visited the Troad, anointed the pillar upon Achilles' tomb with oil, just as the Indians of Quebec anoint and grease the wooden figure which they set up as a grave-post.⁴ Somewhat similarly the scarabæus of the Egyptians obtained a prophylactic power to protect the deceased, upon whom it was placed, in the perils of the lower world, by being anointed with oil.⁵

Uction of the dead before interment was long retained in the Christian Church as a religious rite. It is mentioned by St. Chrysostom and others, and, according to Colet, was in use in England as late as the fifteenth century.⁶

Ecclesiastical Use of Oil.

78. It only remains to notice one or two points

¹ Virgil, *Æneid*, vi. 225 ; Becker, *Gallus*, 521.

² So Pietschman ; see Lang, *Cont. Rev.*, lvii. 364.

³ W. B. Dawkins, *Early Man in Britain*, 341.

⁴ Jevons, *Hist. of Rel.*, 196. ⁵ Lenormant, *Chald. Magic*, 90.

■ *Hierarchies of Dionysius*, ed. Lupton, 152.

connected with the ecclesiastical use of anointing in later times. In the Latin Church, as well as the Greek, it has been the custom to anoint catechumens with oil upon the forehead both before baptism and after baptism,¹ as emblematic of the effusion of the Holy Spirit. Hence came the term "chrysom," or "chrism—child," commonly employed by old English writers for an infant newly baptized. Hence, also, the term "Chrism" used for confirmation, when that rite had been separated from baptism.² Unction was also used at ordinations; but the only rite in which the custom *still* survives in our own Church is the Coronation service, when a few drops of oil are poured on the head of the monarch from a golden spoon. According to mediæval canonists, the king when thus anointed was no longer a mere layman, but an ecclesiastical person, endowed with spiritual jurisdiction. Indeed, Archbishop Cranmer was inclined to think that an anointed king possessed the prerogative of ordaining ministers, like a bishop.³ Hence also came his power of healing "the king's evil" by his touch. It was the doctrine of these canonists that the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity was locally present in the chrism, or cream, used in the anointing, even as the Second Person was present in the Eucharist;⁴ and so the chrism, or oil, was the natural vehicle for the

¹ *Dict. of Christ. Antiq.*, p. 2000; J. Taylor, *Works*, xi. 276.

² Hooker, *Eccles. Pol.*, v., lxvi. See Taylor, *Works*, xi. 261.

³ Harold Browne, *Articles*, p. 558.

⁴ Lyndwode; Dr. J. W. Legge, *The Sacring of the Eng. Kings*, 1894. See Taylor, *Works*, xi. 276.

infusion of the Holy Ghost. A similar use of oil in the ordination of priests and the crowning of kings prevailed among the ancient Egyptians, who called their Pharaohs "the anointed of the gods."¹ Among the Mexicans also priests used to be consecrated by a kind of unction;² and lower savages still—the Hot-tentots and Bechuanas—use grease as a lubricant in ceremonies of initiation.³

St. Cyril of Jerusalem, speaking of the unction which in early times was given in baptism, says: "This holy ointment is no longer simple ointment, nor common, after the invocation, but the gift of Christ. . . . While thy body is anointed with the visible ointment, thy soul is sanctified by the holy, life-giving spirit."⁴ Dean Colet, about 1500, sums up the ecclesiastical uses as follows: "There is frequent use of ointment in the Christian Church, which has its name from 'anointing,' and is called Christian. Now, the chrism is a mixture of different perfumes with the addition of oil, or balsam, or some other oleaginous matter. The Church in this particular has its own peculiar composition."⁵ And thus chrism is a sign of the Holy Spirit, whereby all are strengthened in Christ, and is designed for that conflict which we enter on, under Christ our leader, with

¹ Wilkinson, i. 275.

² Réville, *Religion of Mexico and Peru*; *Hib. Lect.*, 1884, p. 107.

³ Robertson Smith, *Relig. of the Semites*, 364.

⁴ *Catechis. Mystag.*, iii. 3.

⁵ See J. W. Legge, *The Coronation of the Queen* (Ch. Hist. Soc.).

“spiritual wickedness in high places”; with which we contend when anointed and strengthened by the Holy Spirit. . . . At the last, when we ourselves, unvanquished, have come off safe in Christ, and our warfare is done, we are anointed at our departure, that men may know that we have finished the fight by the grace of the same Holy Spirit in whose strength we began the contest.”¹ “When initiated they were anointed with oil for the conflict; whilst at last, as noble warriors on their death, they received their final and completing anointing.” “The corpse when kissed is anointed by the bishop with oil.”² Again, “since the chrism makes perfect, it was therefore called *Teletê* [consummation] by our forefathers. Extreme unction is the consummation of our Christianity. In anointing there in an emblem of Christianising.”³

Conclusion.

79. The psychological unity of the human race, as demonstrated by these customs of rude savages, and the survivals found among the most civilised and spiritually enlightened nations, is indeed wonderful. But still more wonderful the humility of the Only-begotten Son, who, when He was formed in fashion as a man, accepted man's childish stammerings in spiritual

¹ *On the Hierarchies of Dionysius*, ed. Lupton, 153.

² *Id.*, 152.

³ *Id.*, 101.

things, and accommodated Himself to man's imperfect modes of expression, and was content to take as His chief title of honour a word which, in its origin and development, had so ignoble and material a significance. A term, fantastic and *bizarre* in its primitive conception, has been exalted to be a synonym with "the name which is above every name."

"Thy name (*shem*) is ointment (*shemen*) poured forth."¹

Profoundly true is the remark of an eminent anthropologist, that "the thoughts and principles of modern Christianity are attached to intellectual clues which run back through far præ-Christian ages to the very origin of human civilisation, perhaps even of human existence."²

¹ *Song of Solomon*, i. 3.

² E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. i. p. 421.

APPENDIX

PAGE 1.—The name Yakubu and Ya'kub-ilu (= Jacob-el) is found on the Babylonian tablets (Hommel, *Ancient Heb. Tradition*, 96, 203), as well as Ab-ramu (Abî-râmu, "My Father is High") (Id., 96, 74). Hommel notes that Mesopotamia, which was known as the region of Haran in Abraham's time, through an influx of Aramæans had come to be called Padan-Aram, "the Plain of the Aramæans," shortly before the time of Jacob (Id., 206).

PAGE 4.—Laban is mentioned among the gods whose images stood in the temple of Anu at Assur; it was "by the commission of the god Laban" that the temple of the Moon-god at Haran was undertaken by Nabonidus (Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, 249, note 3).

PAGE 13.—The pyramid of Meidûm had originally seven steps, in exact agreement with the seven stages of the oldest Chaldæan temples. The Egyptians, too, appropriated the seven chief colours to the seven planets, just as the Babylonians did (Hommel, *Babylonian and Orient. Record*, vi. 171).

PAGE 20.—Mrs. Van Rensselaer, speaking of the pile of Ely Cathedral rising over the flat fenland, says: "The stern majesty of the tall tower rises like a great cliff in a land where men might well build cliffs, since Nature

had built none." . . . "Only upon the plains of Egypt or Mesopotamia has Nature assisted the effect of man's work by such entire suppression of herself" (*Handbook of Twelve English Cathedrals*, p. 278).

PAGE 24.—Milton would almost seem to have divined a resemblance between "the mountain of the gods" and the Babylonian temple-mound in his description of Lucifer's palace:

" At length into the limits of the North
They came ; and Satan to his royal seat,
High on ■ hill far blazing, *as a mount*
Raised on a mount, with pyramids and towers
From diamond quarries hewn and rocks of gold ;
The palace of great Lucifer (so call
That structure in the dialect of men
Interpreted), which not long after, he
Affecting all equality with God,
In imitation of that mount whereon
Messiah was declared in sight of heaven,
The mountain of the Congregation call'd "

(*Par. Lost.*, v. 755-66).

PAGE 27.—Bel-Harran-Shadua, "the Lord of Harran is my mountain."

Hommel points out that the divine name El Shaddai, "God (is) my mountain," is of the highest antiquity. "At the time at which Abraham migrated from Ur, both the Arabic *saddu* (spelt *satu* by the Babylonians) and the Babylonian rendering *shadû* possessed the same religious meaning, viz. mountain = God." Hence such names as the ancient Hebrew 'Ammi-Shaddai, &c. (*Ancient Heb. Tradition*, 111).

PAGE 35.—Similarly a town, not very far from Ephesus, built upon the side of a hill, is called Scala Nuova (Fellows, *Asia Minor and Lycia*, ed. 1852, p. 205); a

steep pass near Pontresina is named Scaletta (the ladder); and the Schöllenen, in Uri, take their name from the *scaliones*, or ladderlike steps in the rock (Taylor, *Names and their Histories*, 251); for the Tyrian ladder see Maspero, *Struggle of the Nations*, 138-39.

PAGE 39.—Bunsen thought that Arab. 'Has (or N'has), "The Bier" (as in Job ix. 9, xxxviii. 32), i.e. the constellation of the Great Bear, might be identified with the Egyptian *Hes*, "the throne" (of God); β in the Little Bear being the Pole Star, 2000-1000 B.C., in Greek "The Phœnician" (star) (*Egypt's Place in History*, iv. 350-52).

Browning hitches some of the old Jewish learning into what by courtesy we may call poetry:

"The constellation mapped
And mentioned by our elders—yea, from Job
Down to Satam—as figuring forth—what?
Perpend a mystery! Ye call it *Dob*—
'The Bear': I trow a wiser name than that
Were *Aish*—'The Bier': a corpse those four stars hold,
Which—are not those three daughters weeping at
'*Banoth*'? I judge so: list while I unfold
The reason. As in twice twelve hours this Bier
Goes and returns, about the East-cone rolled,
So may a setting luminary here
Be rescued from extinction, rolled anew
Upon its track of labour, strong and clear,
About the Pole—that Salem, every Jew
Helps to build up when thus he saves some Saint
Ordained its architect"

(R. Browning, *Jocoseria*, *Jochanan Hakkadosh*).

PAGE 41.—Purchas, speaking of the sun-worship of the Tartars, says: "When the Sunne is declining out of their sight, the Moone or North-starre, is his receyuer or successor (if you will) in that tribute of their deuotions" (*Pilgrims*, 1614, 492).

PAGE 43.—The similitude by which the steadfast Polestar is made an emblem of the unchangeable God is capable of a wide amount of literary illustration, *e.g.* :

"Behold this Needle, when the Arctick stone
Hath touch'd it, how it trembles up and down,
Hunts for the *Pole*; and cannot be possess'd
Of peace, until it find that point, that rest :
Such is the heart of man : which when it hath
Attain'd the virtue of a lively faith,
It finds no rest on earth, makes no abode,
In any object, but his *Heaven*, his *God* "

(F. Quarles, *Divine Fancies*, 1664, p. 11).

"The creation . . . does not attain to its own proper end—like the needle which trembles continually and cannot rest when it is forcibly turned away from the Pole" (W. Cowper, *Heaven Opened*, 1611, p. 250).

"(Man) knows he hath a home, but scarce knows where . . .
He knocks at all doors, strays and roams ;
Nay, hath not so much wit as some stones have,
Which in the darkest nights point to their homes,
By some hid sense their Maker gave "

(H. Vaughan, *Silex Scintillans*, 1654, "Man").

"I feel the little needle of my soul touched with a kind of magnetical and attractive virtue, that it always moves towards Him [the Creator], as being her *summum bonum*, the true center of her happiness" (J. Howell, *Familiar Letters*, 1639, ii. 53).

"Like to the Arctic needle, that . . .
First frantics up and down, from side to side ; . . .
At length he slacks his motion, and doth rest
His trembling point at his bright pole's beloved breast.
E'en so my soul, being hurried here and there . . .

Thus finding all the world's delight to be
But empty toys, good God, she points alone to thee "

(Quarles, *Emblems*, 1635, v. 4).

"Our life's a flying shadow, God's the Pole:
The Index pointing to Him is our Soul"

(Mrs. Gatty, *Ebberston Sun-dial*, p. 80).

A brave captain, starting on a voyage of Arctic discovery, pointing to the text, "Have faith in God," said, "There is the true pole!" (F. W. Farrar, *In the Days of thy Youth*, p. 305).

"Forth, where the wild waves roll
Their eager currents to the frost-bound north,
At the stern call of duty speed they forth
Toward the mysterious pole . . .
While guides them ever on their devious way
The constant polar star.
Type of that sleepless love
Which, whether 'mid the tropics' brilliancy
Or in the stillness of the Arctic Sea,
Guards them from heaven above"

(*The Treasures of the Snow*).

"Ryght as cercles that tournen about a same Centre or about a poynt; thilke cercle that is in[ne]rest or moost withynne ioineth to the symplesse of the myddel and is as it were a Centre or poynte to that other cercles that tournen abouten hym. Ryght so by semblable resoun . . . is the thing more free and lous fro destyne as it axeth and holdeth hym ner to thilke Centre of thinges, that is to seyne God" (Chaucer, *Boethius* (E. E. T. S.), p. 136).

So in King Alfred's version of Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophice*, God is the axis round which all creatures revolve:

"Just as the wheel revolves on the axle of the wain and the axle stands still, and carries all the wain, and controls all its motions; the wheel turns round and

the nave being nearest to the axle goes much more quietly and securely than the felloes do; even so the axis is the highest good that we call God; and the best men go nearest to God, as the nave goes nearest to the axle" (ed. W. J. Sedgefield, p. 129).

"All things are drawn to their own centre. Be Thou the Centre of my heart, O God, my Light, my only Love" (S. Augustine).

The Wintus have a "Song of Waida Werris" (*i.e.* the Polar Star) which says:

"The circuit of earth which you see,
The scattering of stars in the sky which you see,
All that is the place for my hair" [*i.e.*, beams of light]
(J. Curtin, *Creation Myths of Prim. America*, 516).

PAGE 47.—In Ezek. i. 4, the fiery manifestation of God comes from the north. "The north was felt by the Jews to be the peculiar seat of the power of Jehovah (*cf.* Ps. xlviii. 2; Isa. xiv. 13). The high mountain range closing in the Holy Land on the north suggested the idea of a height reaching to heaven" (Curry, *Speaker's Comm. in loco*). Professor Cheyne comments (Isa. xiv. 13) on the mysterious awe attaching to the north, and refers to *Laws of Manu*, i. 67, ii. 52, 70. For the Akkadians the north was "the point of prosperity" (Lenormant, *Chald. Magic*, 169).

"Sans doute la race hindoue semble toujours tourner ses yeux vers le nord: là est pour elle le séjour des dieux; . . . là est 'Outtara-Kourou, sorte d'Eden primitif." "Les Brahmanes rattachent au nord l'idée de tout ce qui est primitif et sacré" (Renan, *De l'Origine du Langage*, 3rd ed. 224). See also O. Schrader, *Prehistoric Antiquities of the Aryan Peoples*, 254-56.

PAGE 50.—The ancient Egyptians held the planets, as being divine elementary powers, to be worthy of worship (Bunsen, *Egypt's Place in History*, iv. 663). For the personification of the stars, see Tylor, *Prim. Culture*, ii. 290 *seq.* (3rd ed.) and the authorities referred to in H. Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, 3rd ed. i. 371.

PAGE 52.—Similarly Milton speaks of

“ the morning star that guides
The starry flock ” (*Par. Lost*, v. 708).

PAGE 60.—Angels and stars. “The Zophasemin or Watchers of Heaven (in the cosmogony of Philo of Byblos) are the Elohim, the co-creative spirits, who act during the whole process of creation with God and under God. The great constellations were their symbols or organs, by means of which they acted upon the animal and human world” (Bunsen, *Egypt's Place in History*, iv. 182).

“When once the constellations were regarded as divine beings, and consequently more or less as super-human personalities, that is, as ideal men, there might, and under certain conjunctions must, have been a state where the religious contemplation of those starry symbols would gain the mastery over man. Every symbol has a tendency to be regarded and worshipped as unconditionally one with the idea, and this tendency will show itself with very peculiar force in the astral element. The star becomes God; whoever does not worship it, denies God” (Bunsen, *Egypt's Place in Universal History*, iv. 75).

"This, however, is not the basis of religion, but the symbol of the religion already impliedly existing" (Id., 74).

An ancient Akkadian hymn celebrates the Fire-god, Gibil, who controls the lower spirits of earth and heaven, as follows :

"(To) the heaven below they extended (their path), and to the heaven that is unseen they climbed afar.

In the Star(s) of Heaven was not their ministry ; in the watch of the thirty (or Mazzaroth, the Zodiacal signs) was their office "

(Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, p. 180).

PAGE 69.—The angels and the stars were supposed to have been created simultaneously when "the heavens and the earth were finished and all the host of them" (Gen. ii. 1). "This visible host of heaven was the work of the fourth day. The invisible host of angels was, in most probability, created in the very same instant with the heavens themselves" (J. Lightfoot, *Works*, ii. 72).

"We know that light is God's eldest childe, his first borne of all creatures ; and it is ordinarily received that the Angels are twins with the light, made then when light was made" (Dr. Donne, *LXXX. Sermons*, 1640, p. 729).

"Ye stars that round the Sun of Righteousness
In glorious order roll,
With harps for ever strung, ready to bless
God for each rescu'd soul,
Ye eagle spirits, that build in light divine,
Oh think of us to-day "

(Keble, *Christian Year*, *St. Michael and All Angels*).

PAGE 74.—Ôn. Bunsen notes that the Sun-god of Heliopolis in Syria (Baalbek) came from Assyria ; and

quotes from Macrobius (*Saturn.*, i. 23): "The Assyrians celebrate with great ceremony in the city of Heliopolis the worship of the Sun under the name of Jove. The image of the god was brought from a city of Egypt also called Heliopolis in the reign of Senemures or Senepos" (*Egypt's Place in History*, iv. 687).

PAGE 81.—There is a manifest reference to the vision of Bethel in the words of our Lord to Nathanael: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man" (St. John i. 51). The ideal vision of Jacob has its counterpart in the Incarnation. Jesus is the one medium through which fellowship with the unseen world can be maintained, in and through Him, as once upon the stairs of the heaven-aspiring temple-mound, all spiritual powers and messengers must needs pass between man and the Father. The Son of God become the Son of Man bridges over the unmeasured gulf between heaven and earth, and continued intercourse is henceforth established between them with an opened heaven. There is no revelation downward, no communication upward, but by the appointed Mediator, who is the Divine Staircase, as well as the Door and the Way. Through Him all gifts and graces descend, and no man cometh unto the Father but by Him. Through Him the gate of Heaven is found to be on earth, and the wonder of "Beth-el" is swallowed up in the greater mystery of "Emmanu-el"—the God of Israel no longer appearing far off, but near—no longer at the summit of the ladder, but at its foot, "made a little lower than the angels" (Heb. ii. 9).

PAGE 83.—Jacob's veneration of the stone has been

drawn by some Roman Catholic writers into an argument for the lawfulness of image-worship. Thus Vasques (*De Adoratione*, lib. iii. disp. 1, c. 2, n. 8): "If Jacob did erect a stone for a monument, and anoint it with oyle; if in this monument so erected he adored God after he had seen a miraculous vision in that place; if upon his awaking he sayd: This place is truly holy, not that he thought there was any holiness inherent in it, but because the holy Lord had there vouchsafed to appeare: why, I pray you, may not every man by faith sound and sincere consider God as intimately present in every thing that is, and adore God with it and in it, and with this intention make choice of what creature he list for a monument or remembrance of God's presence?" The learned divine, Dr. Thomas Jackson (*Works*, 1673, i. 981), having cited this passage, gives his own judgment as follows: "Whether Jacob did only worship God, *præsente lapide*, or whether he did in some sort externally worship or co-adore the stone with God; or whether he did make unto himself such sensible attestation of his solemn vow, by anointing the stone, and erecting it into a pillar, as we do of our solemn oaths by kissing of the book, I leave it to the Reader; though for mine own part I like this last form of speech the best. . . . If the wisest or most circumspect man on earth should worship God in every place, after the same manner for every circumstance that Jacob did God in Bethel; or if the most accurate anatomist of his own thoughts or affections should take every stone into such consideration, whilst he worshipeth God, as Jacob did that stone: He should become a gross Idolater without all help from any distinction, where-with the Romish Church can furnish him. The truth is,

that Jacob did so worship God in the presence of the stone, as his posterity was bound to worship him before the Ark of the Covenant. Both worshipped him *in* or *by* those creatures, after such a manner, as we may not worship him in any created visible substance, save only in that *created substance* wherein he dwelleth bodily. The manner of his presence (then) at Luz or Bethel, and in the Ark, were shadows or pledges of his inhabitation in the man Christ Jesus" (*Works*, i. 990).

PAGE 84.—So an article on "Semitic Religions" in the *Edinburgh Review*, April 1892, p. 332: "To man in early days all nature appeared instinct with animal life. The sun, moon, and planets moved in the heavens, walking its crystal floor, or soaring on unseen wings [*cf.* Angels, p. 67]. The tree which waved its boughs, the stone which fell from heaven, or was dashed by the thunderbolt from the cliff, the fire which ran and devoured . . . all these were living things, no less than man or beast; they were the bodies or the manifestations of things superior to man, immortal as the heavenly bodies, irresistible as the fire, the flood, or the tempest; fair and long-living as the tree, strong and immovable as the mountain or the rock."

PAGE 91.—So Bunsen "To Schelling":

"God, soul, the world, to primal man were one;
In shapely stone, in picture, and in song
They worshipped Him who was both One and All.
God-like to them was human kind; God dwelt
In the piled *mountain-rock*, the veined plant,
And pulsing brute; and where the planets wheel
Through the blue spaces, Godhead moved in them"

(*Egypt's Place in History*, iv. 3).

PAGE 94.—The so-called Extern-stones in the Teuto-

berg Forest, at which the peasantry used formerly to perform certain rustic ceremonies, were probably called originally Eostern-stones, or Easter-n-stones, and were dedicated to Ostara, the goddess of Spring. At Gambach, in Upper Hesse, the young people went to the Easter-stones on the top of the hill every Easter, and danced and held sports (W. Wägnier, *Asgard and the Gods*, 114-15).

On prehistoric stone-monuments and the superstitions attaching to them see Chéruel, *Dict. Hist. des Institutions*, s.v. "Gaulois." Also Maspero, *Struggle of the Nations*, 161-63; E. W. Hopkins, *Religion of India*, 535, 538.

PAGE 112.—Canon Tristram observed a megalithic circle east of Beitin, something like a rude Stonehenge, and similar to one on Hermon, which he believed to be the remains of some pre-Canaanite worship (*Sunday at Home*, 1872, p. 218).

PAGE 113.—Isaiah having referred to Ôn, "The city of the Sun" (*cheres*), as about to become "the city of destruction" (*heres*), prophesies that the obelisks which had hitherto belonged to Ra shall yet be consecrated to Jehovah: "In that day shall there be an altar to Jehovah in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar (*matztzēbah*) at the border thereof to Jehovah" (xix. 19). Delitzsch (*in loco*) notes that Ôn, the Anu of the old Egyptians, "is according to them the sun" (Cyril).

PAGE 114.—"El-'Ozzā—un bloc de pierre muet et insensible—prétendue divinité à laquelle ils immolent des victimes" (Caussin de Perceval, *Histoire des Arabes*, i. 321).

PAGE 115.—The argument here advanced, that the sacrifice of Isaac was suggested to Abraham by his early devotion to the sanguinary goddess 'Ozzā, would gain in

force if we accepted the theory lately put forward by Mr. Margoliouth, that Yah (Jahveh) is to be identified with Aa ("water," Greek Aos), Ea, the god of the sea and of wisdom, and is ultimately one with Sin, the Moon-god, who is also called En-zu, "lord of knowledge" (*Contemporary Review*, October 1898, p. 581 *seq.*; with its supplement, *Hebrew-Babylonian Affinities*, 1899). Mr. Margoliouth maintains that the worship of Jahveh among the primitive Semites in its earliest beginnings would be indistinguishable from the very far-spread adoration of the Moon-god, who held a supreme position among the old Babylonian deities and was "the father and king of the gods." This great god whom Abraham had long been accustomed to regard as the supreme ruler of heaven, while dwelling at Ur and Hârân—to whom, indeed, his own man Abram (Abi-ramu, "My Father is High") may have borne witness—he had come to recognise under a more spiritual aspect, not as Sin, the Moon-god, any longer, but as Jahveh the Most High, the only God of the Hebrews, before whom all lesser deities of other peoples had to give place. If it can be made probable that the ideas with which the early Hebrews surrounded the true God, Jahveh, were to some extent the same with those which had previously belonged to their paramount deity, Sin, it would then be the more natural for Abraham, in his imperfect enlightenment, to associate with Jahveh some of the attributes and ideas which had once pertained to the female counterpart of Sin, viz. 'Ozzā. He might even conceive Him as requiring the offering of his first-born, as that precursor would, or might, have done¹ (*Infra*, 179).

¹ Cf. J. Robertson, *Early Religion of Israel*, p. 254.

These additional facts may be added. Among the Babylonian names deciphered by Mr. Pinches we find Sin-Aa, *i.e.* "Sin is Ya," equating Jah with the Moon-god, and Sin-šadûnu, "Sin is Shaddai" (or a mountain).¹ Sin is "the Protector of the earth" (Hommel, 64), "The Gracious One" (Id., 68); "Sin knows everything" (Id., 72); His worship was the most widely diffused (Id., 73); "The Creator is Sin" (Id., 74); "Sin is Omniscient," "releases (from guilt)," "awakens the dead," "is Judge of the dead" (Id., 75).

"It was only the moon [Sin], the sun [Shamash] and the sky [Anu] which conveyed an impression of deity to the Babylonian mind; and if we substitute the simple word 'God' [Ilu] for the moon, the sun, or the sky, these names express no sentiment which is inconsistent with the highest and purest monotheism" (Id., 76). The ideas which go to make up the grand conception of Jahveh may, therefore, have been evolved out of (or reared by revelation on the basis of) the rudimentary ideas involved in Sin, the supreme lunar deity of the early natural religion in which Abraham had been brought up. This would, perhaps, account for the circumstance that the new moon was long observed as a festival of Jahveh, only second to the Sabbath itself (Amos viii. 5; 1 Sam. xx. 5; 2 Kings iv. 23; Ezek. xlvi. 3; Num. xxviii. 11-15; Ps. lxxxi. 3). See especially Isaiah (lxvi. 23): "It shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me."

¹ *Vic. Inst. Trans.*, xxviii. 13; but Ya (Ya'u=Heb. *Yahu*, Jahveh) is also similarly compounded with Bel, Ashshur, Shamash, and other gods of the Babylonian pantheon (Id., 11-13, 35).

The prophet Hosea predicts that the new moon (as a festival perverted) should yet devour (*i.e.* prove the ruin of) Israel (v. 7). *Cf.* Col. ii. 16.

The remarkable order of service on New Moon's Day is given in Edersheim, *The Temple*, p. 254 *seq.* "Scarcely any other festive season left so continuous an impress on the religious life of Israel" (*Id.*, 250). All their great festivals were fixed by reference to the new moon (*Id.*, 170, 251). The whole subject deserves careful examination.

Mr. Margoliouth also observes that "in an extant hymn to Nannar (the Glorious), as the Moon-god was by preference called at Ur of the Chaldees, he is addressed as 'lord of the hosts of heaven'—*i.e.* as I take it, as the deity who was seen to gather around him the glorious host of stars on the weird vault of night. This distinction, more than any other, has probably secured to the Moon-god a much greater importance than could be claimed by the Sun, who had to cross the heavens unattended, and therefore unserved. And it is this characteristic appellation of Nannar which is clearly reflected in the combination Jahveh Sebaôth of the Old Testament. The God of Israel, as the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, was 'the Lord of the hosts of heaven,' *i.e.* of the myriad of shining stars, and, by inference, of the various powers which animated them" [the angels] (*Hebrew-Babylonian Affinities*, p. 7). With the substitution of "lord" for "lady" in the following lines of Quarles they would fairly represent the conception of the primitive Semite:

"The pale-fac'd lady of the black-ey'd night
First tips her horned brows with easy light,

Whose curious train of spangled nymphs attire
Her next night's glory with increasing fire "

(*Emblems* (1635), ii. 2).

"Les Perses, comme parfois les Hébreux, prenaient les étoiles pour des armées célestes que commandait Mithra" (A. Maury, *Croyances et Légendes de l'Antiquité*, p. 164).

"*Bil Kissat*, 'the lord of hosts,' was a phrase full of significance to the believing Babylonian" (Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, p. 217).

Josephus quotes a tradition from Berosus that Abram was "skilful in the celestial science"; and a Jewish tradition, that it was from observing the irregular phenomena of the heavenly bodies that he was led to assert the supremacy of the one God, who created them all, and that it was in consequence of the opposition which this new doctrine excited amongst the people of Chaldæa that he thought it better to leave that country (*Antiquities of the Jews*, bk. 1, ch. vii. § 1, 2; cf. Tomkins, *Studies on the Times of Abraham*, 14, 15, and W. J. Deane, *Abraham, his Life and Times*, 11-14).

PAGE 116.—The learned Dr. Thomas Jackson says: "Jacob anointed the stone in the place where God had appeared to him; the Saracens, from this or like traditions, celebrate their sacrifices with apish and childish solemnities. . . . Falling back to Heathenism, they adore Lucifer or the Morning Star." He quotes the second Nicene Synod as condemning the Saracens for offering sacrifices in the desert to an inanimate stone, calling out the word "Chobar" (*Works*, 1673, i. 119). Compare *supra*, p. 118, note 2. "The old Saracens' adoration of a stone may with better probability be

justified by Jacob's example, than the usual worship of images in the Romish Church" (Id., 986). On the ancient reverence for sacred stones see some remarks in Dr. J. Robertson, *Early Religion of Israel*, p. 203 seq.

Tiele notes that the Primitive Arabian Religion had three Moon-goddesses: Allât, the light moon; Manât, the dark moon; and Al'Uzza, the union of the two, which reappear among the Babylonians and Assyrians with partially altered names (*Outlines of the History of Religion*, p. 64).

PAGE 117.—It is remarkable that the Skidi or Wolf Pawnees also used on rare occasions to offer a captive man as a sacrifice to the Morning Star (A. Lang, *The Making of Religion*, p. 256).

The cult of Sin, of Harran, even down to late times was connected with the cruel practice of sacrificing to him human victims, whose heads, prepared according to the ancient rite, were accustomed to give oracular responses (Maspero, *The Struggle of the Nations*, p. 26).

There is an old Arab tradition that Abraham was commanded to sacrifice Ishmael also when seven years old. Satan, in human form, tries to divert him from his purpose, but Abraham thrice drives him away with stones. Ultimately Gabriel interferes and substitutes a goat for the boy (Caussin de Perceval, *Histoire des Arabes avant l'Islamisme*, i. 166).

PAGE 120.—"Blocks of hewn stone, isolated boulders, or natural rocks were recognised by certain mysterious marks to be the house of the god, the Betyli or Bethels in which he enclosed a part of his intelligence and vital force (G. Maspero, *Struggle of the Nations*, 1896, p. 160). Most of them were objects of worship: they were anointed

with oil, and victims were slaughtered in their honour; the faithful even came at times to spend the night and sleep near them in order to obtain in their dreams glimpses of the future" (Id., 164).

PAGE 134.—Commentators have found a difficulty in determining the meaning of Ps. xlv. 7, quoted in Heb. i. 8:

"God, thy God, hath anointed thee
With the oil of gladness *above thy fellows.*"

Some have supposed that "fellows" here refers to the angels, others that men are intended. The word in the Lxx. and Hebrews, μετόχοι, "participants" shows the meaning plainly enough. The Messiah has a pre-eminent anointing above all others *who have shared or participated in the same rite*, and have been in their degree lesser "*Christs*"; that title being given in Scripture to many who were solemnly ordained to do a special work for God." "Nemo tamen nisi Christus simul et Rex, et Sacerdos, et Propheta fuit" (T. Goodwin, *Moses et Aaron*, 1710, p. 78).

PAGE 142.—Vegetable oil was, no doubt, substituted for animal at an early period. The fugitive Egyptian Sinûhît, after living for a time with the Beni Qedem, or "Sons of the East," was glad to leave "the oil of the trees to those who anointed themselves therewith" (Hommel, *Anct. Heb. Trad.*, 50). A part of the malediction given in a tablet of the Assyrian monarch Assur-bel-Kala (about 1100 B.C.) is:

"The oil when you anoint yourselves, may they destroy"
(Id., 197).

In the Descent of Ishtar she is directed how to restore to life Tammuz (the Sun-god), her bridegroom :

“ Pour over him the pure waters, (anoint him) with precious oil ”
(Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, 226).

PAGE 143.—According to the Shatapatha-Brâhmana the first sacrificial animal was man himself, and the sacrificial virtue (*medha*) of the offering lay in his marrow; this is now represented by the *ghee* or clarified butter with which the sacrificial cake is anointed (Ragozin, *Vedic India*, 409). This Aryan conception closely corresponds to the Semitic belief that the essential value of the sacrifice lay in the fat of the victim.

PAGE 146.—I have abstained from introducing a secondary consideration, which may have contributed to the ritual use of oil or fat. It was held of importance that the sacrifice should be quickly and completely burnt. If the victim remained unconsumed upon the altar, it seemed a bad omen, as if the deity had rejected the offering. What contributed more than anything else to the fire burning brightly and producing the wished-for result was the fat of the victim, or the oil that was poured upon the altar. This comes out plainly in the ritual of the early Aryans. A priest in the Rig-Vedas says: “I anoint or brighten up the fire with oblations of fat.”¹ Addressing Agni, Fire, he says again: “They anoint thee with butter as a welcome friend.”² Accordingly we find in the Vedas, that it was a religious act to feed Agni thus, three times a day.³ When the sacred fire was

¹ M. Müller, *Lect. on Language*, ii. 405.

² *R.-V.*, v. 3, 2; M. Müller, *Physical Religion*, 185.

³ M. Müller, *Physical Religion*, 185; Ragozin, *Vedic India*, 158.

kindled it used to be cherished and fostered by pouring clarified butter upon it, and the fire was then the "anointed" one (*akta*). Burnouf says, ghee, the essence of butter, as being the purest part of the cream, which is the best part of the milk, and that the best type of food yielded by the highest type of animal, the cow, was full of life-giving energy. Being also the most combustible animal matter it was the most efficient food for fire, the great mediatorial agent in all sacrifices which raises them from earth to heaven in odorous vapour.¹ Hence came the ritual use of oil among the early Aryans. Prof. M. Williams notes that this oblation of clarified butter in fire for the nourishment of the gods was the oldest form of Vedic sacrifice.² Ghee, or the fat of the victim, used also to be placed on the body before burning it on the pile to divert the fierceness of Agni from the dead.³ With this Aryan conception we may compare the language of an ancient synod on the subject of chrism: "Oil, being the most proper matter of fire, is therefore used in Confirmation." "This using of oil was instead of the baptism with fire, which Christ baptized His disciples with in Pentecost."⁴ This, however, was an afterthought, outside the sphere of Biblical ideas. Yet there is a passage in Philo which tends in the same direction. Having noted that the blood and the fat of the victim are to be burnt with fire, he adds: "The one being poured upon the altar as a libation, and the other

¹ E. Burnouf, *Science of Religions*, pp. 129, 130.

² *Hinduism*, p. 39; *The Vedas*, ed. M. Müller, i. p. 68.

³ M. Müller, *Anthropological Religion*, pp. 243, 247; Ragozin, *Vedic India*, 352.

⁴ Synodus Bituricensis, quoted by Jer. Taylor, *Works* (ed. 1828), vol. xi. p. 277.

as a fuel to the flame, being applied instead of oil (?), by reason of its fatness, to the consecrated and holy flame."¹ Oil was poured by the Latins over sacrifices to Pluto, perhaps to feed the fire as well as to propitiate the ruler of the dead, "Pingue super oleum fundens ardentibus extis."²

PAGE 156.—The decree of the Council of Trent as to Extreme Unction is as follows: "If any one should say that the sacred unction of the sick does not confer grace, nor forgive sin, nor relieve the sick; but that it has now ceased, as if the gift of healing only existed formerly; let him be anathema" (Cap. iii., can. 2, sess. xiv.).

"It also helps in the recovery of the health of the body, if that should be expedient to the salvation of the soul" (R. P. R. Bellarmino, *Dottrina Cristiana*, Roma, 1836).

Any one who is curious on this subject may consult an elaborate work, entitled "Scacchus (F. Fortunatus) Sacrorum Elaeocharmaton Myrothecium Sacroprophanum, in quo ex antiquis Graecis, ac Latinis Scriptoribus quidquid ad Nomina, Antiquitatem, Usus, et Abusum Oleorum, et Unguentorum, ex Sacris habetur litteris, dilucidè explicatur." 3 vols. 4to. Romae, 1625-29.

¹ *Works*, ed. Bohn, vol. iii. p. 386.

² Virgil, *Aeneid*, vi. 254.

INDEX

ABRAM, 4, 163
 Amshaspands, 62, 67
 Anathoth, 74
 Angels, 47, 70, 169, 170
Angiras, 70
Annuna-ki, 48, 50
 Anointing, 133, 147, 183
 Anu, 74, 75
 Arab stone-worship, 106, 174
 'Azzāh, 118

 BABEL, 78
 Babylonian anointing, 137
 Babylonian astrology, 60
 Babylonian stone-worship, 108
 Baetyls, 120, 179
Bāmōth, 18, 27
 Bethel, 31, 73, 76, 174
 Beth-on, 73, 113
 Beth-Shemesh, 74
 Bethuel, 77
 Budge, 157
 Burton, Sir R., 106

 CELTIC stone-worship, 99

"Christ," 133, 154, 180
 Colet, 160
 Cyril, 160

DANTE, 21, 43, 55
Dayan-Samē, 40
 Dhruva, 46
 Dillmann, 123
 Diodorus, 60
 Dreams, 78

EGYPTIAN stone-worship, 112
 E-kur, 16
 E-Parra, 16
 E-Sagilla, 14
 Ewald, 121
 E-Zida, 14, 65

FAIRBAIRN, 141
 Fat, 142, 145, 149, 181
 Folk-medicine, 149

Hajar al-Aswad, 106
Harel, 26

"Hebrews," 6
 Hebrew stone-worship, 123
 Hommel, 130, 163, 176

Igigi, 48, 50
 Ihering, 17, 110
Il, 5
Imgarsag, 16, 53
 Indian stone-worship, 89
 Irish stone-worship, 100
 Izeds, 62

JACKSON, 172, 178
 "Jacob's Stee," 36
 Jah, 42
 Jevons, 95

KA'ABAH, 106
 Kalisch, 51, 141
Ki-zal, 138
 Kuenen, 129
 Kurtz, 129

LABAN, 4, 163
 "Ladder," 35, 66, 165
 Lenormant, 67
Lia Fail, 100

Matztzēbah, 123, 124
 Mêru, 46
 Milkah, 4
Mismar, 42
 Moon-god, 175, 177
 Mountain of the World, 22, 24,
 164

NINIP, 31
 Nippur, 16
 North Star, 39, 41, 166

OIL, 134, 139, 146, 180
 On, 74, 112, 113, 170, 174
 Origen, 56, 65
 'Ozzā, 114, 174

Paraku, 38
Paroketh, 38, 64
 Pearson, 140
Perrons, 108
 Peters, J. P., 16
 Plautus, 67
 Pliny, 156
 Pole Star, 40, 42, 44, 165

RENAN, 99
 Rock, 128, 130

SABAEANS, 42
Sabaoth, 58, 64, 177
 Sabians, 41
 Sarai, 4
 Sayce, 21, 32
 Semitic stone-worship, 105
 Shaddai, 27, 164
Shukkallu, 49
 Sin, 111, 175, 176, 179
 Smith, W. R., 86, 125
 Star-worship, 52, 169, 170
 Stone-worship, 84, 94, 172, 174
Sullām, 11, 35

TEOCALLI, 21

Terah, 4

Teraphim, 5

Thorician stone, 83

Tzûr, 128, 130

UNCTION of sick, 155, 183

‘Uzzā, 115, 179

WIEDEMANN, 112

YAH, 30, 42, 175

Yazatas, 62

ZIGGURAT, 12, 15, 21

Zimbir, 16



